

CASCADE DATA CENTER ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
PUBLIC NOTICE & AGENDA
OCTOBER 28, 2026
7:00PM

NOTICE: Notice is hereby given that the Cascade Data Center Advisory Committee will hold a meeting on **Wednesday, October 28, 2026 at 7:00 PM** in the Cascade City Hall Council Chambers, 320 1st Ave W, Cascade, IA 52033.

1. Call to Order
2. Introductions - Roll
3. Approve the Agenda as Presented
4. Appoint a Chairman
5. Appoint a Vice Chairman
6. Review Checklist of Items to Include in Ordinance
7. Review and Discuss Sample Ordinances
6. Other Business – Next Meeting Date and Agenda
7. Adjournment

A COMMUNITY CHECKLIST FOR EVALUATING DATA CENTER IMPACTS

Data center projects are often well underway before the public becomes aware of them, leaving communities with limited opportunities to influence key decisions. Asking informed questions early in the process can help protect **local water resources, public health, and overall community well-being**. This checklist brings together lessons and best practices from **multiple checklists, toolkits, and guidance documents developed by organizations^{1,2,3,4} across the Great Lakes states**. It is designed to help communities evaluate proposed data centers through a **comprehensive lens that considers environmental impacts, economic implications, public health, community benefits, and other local concerns**, supporting more transparent, accountable, and balanced decision-making that aligns with the long-term protection of the Great Lakes and the people who depend on them.

Use this checklist to engage early with local officials, planning boards, and developers.

COMMUNITY CHECKLIST FOR EVALUATING DATA CENTER IMPACTS	
	6.1 Water Resources & Supply
	☐ What amount of water will the data center need each day and each year?
	☐ What water quality is required (drinking-quality, industrial, non-potable)?
	☐ What is the source of the water (surface water, groundwater, municipal supply)?
	☐ Is that water source already stressed or at risk of depletion?
	☐ Have seasonal or drought conditions been considered in water planning?
	☐ Have regional water studies or projections been reviewed?
	☐ Who pays for new pipes or wastewater treatment if upgrades are needed?
	6.2 Water Impacts & Protection
	☐ Will the project affect local rivers, lakes, wetlands, or aquifers?
	☐ Could private wells or small community water systems be impacted?
	☐ How will wastewater or discharge be handled and monitored?
	6.3 Water Efficiency & Reuse
	☐ Could water withdrawals or discharges affect downstream users or ecosystems?
	☐ Are there plans for closed-loop cooling systems to reduce water use?
	☐ Will stormwater, recycled water, or treated wastewater be used instead of fresh water?
	☐ Are there opportunities to reuse water on-site or with nearby facilities?
	☐ Can discharged water be safely reused by other businesses or community uses?

¹ Freshwater Society. (2025). *Data centers and water use* (June 2025). https://freshwater.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Data-Centers-and-Water-Use_Freshwater.pdf

² Coalition for Responsible Data Center Development. (n.d.). *Coalition for Responsible Data Center Development* (Website).

³ MediaJustice. (2025). *The people say no: Resisting data centers in the South*. MediaJustice.

⁴ Hoosier Environmental Council. (2025). *A community guide to data centers*. Indianapolis.

	6.4 Energy Use & Air Impacts
	☐ How much electricity will the data center require?
	☐ Where will that energy come from (renewable vs. fossil fuels)?
	☐ Will diesel backup generators be used, and how often will they operate?
	☐ How will they avoid using noisy, polluted diesel generators for backup power?
	☐ How will air pollution from energy use and generators be minimized?
	☐ Who pays for the new power plants or grid upgrades needed?
	6.5 Noise & Community Impacts
	☐ What noise levels are expected from generators, cooling systems, and HVAC equipment?
	☐ What noise mitigation measures will be used (sound barriers, setbacks, operating limits)?
	6.6 Land Use & Community Planning
	☐ Is the data center located in an appropriate zoning area?
	☐ Are there opportunities to co-locate with complementary industries or land uses?
	6.7 Long-Term Accountability
	☐ How will water use, water quality, and emissions be monitored and reported?
	☐ Are there enforceable conditions or permits tied to water and environmental protection?
	6.8 Community Transparency
	☐ Has the public been given meaningful opportunities to comment?
	☐ Are all water, energy, and environmental data publicly available?
	6.9 Nature-Based Solutions & Green Infrastructure
	☐ Will the project include green infrastructure (like rain gardens, bioswales, or wetlands) to soak up rainwater and reduce runoff?
	☐ How will the project protect or use existing natural areas (trees, wetlands, open space) to manage stormwater instead of paving over them?
	☐ Will trees be planted in parking lots and along paved areas to provide shade and reduce extreme heat?



IOWA DATA CENTER DECISION TOOL FOR COUNTIES, CITIES, COMMUNITIES

The Iowa Data Center Decision Tool provides municipal, county, and community leaders with a framework of questions to consider when evaluating whether to encourage data center development within their jurisdictions. The Decision Tool is intended to support informed decision-making by identifying issues that local governments may wish to assess before engaging with data center developers or considering policies related to data center siting and development.

Introduction: Iowa as the Next Data Center Frontier

Iowa is one of the most attractive locations for data centers in the country due to its flat and affordable land, relatively low energy costs, limited historical drought, and lower construction and labor costs. Large energy and water utilities already serve substantial data center demands, signaling a welcoming environment for expanding or building new data centers.

For some Iowa communities, data centers represent an opportunity to diversify the local tax base, create construction and skilled technical jobs, and attract related business investment. Communities may also view data centers as supporting economic development goals by using available land, expanding digital infrastructure, and generating long-term property tax revenue. Communities may also worry about power imbalances and access to resources between different sized localities. Officials and residents may not have the tools they need to ensure a safe, responsible approach to deciding whether to invite a data center into their community, county, or city.

The questions in this Decision Tool address infrastructure, water and energy use, economic impacts, land use, and community priorities. By considering these questions, city and county officials and residents can better understand the potential impacts of data center development and make informed decisions that align with community needs, goals, and values.

Iowa Data Center Decision Tool: Trusted Iowa Voices

Content in the Iowa Data Center Decision Tool is informed by trusted, *Iowa-based* experts from cities, counties, drinking water utilities, and University of Iowa academic experts.

Officials and community leaders are encouraged to prepare for possible discussions with developers and community members by reviewing the questions on the following pages and understanding what actions they may want to consider depending on the responses. Responses to the following questions may point communities toward zoning amendments, site plan conditions, utility service agreements, road use agreements, state permits, third-party technical review, or perhaps a temporary moratorium on data center development until facts are gathered.

Community Considerations

Residents in communities considering data center development express concerns about limited transparency, insufficient access to information or opportunities to express opinions, environmental impacts, and a lack of trust in negotiations. Thoughtfully engaging residents and businesses is important, and providing the public with factual information will help with understanding. A city or county data center webpage can be a helpful community resource. Engaging residents through public meetings, informational sessions, surveys, and other opportunities for input can help local leaders understand community perspectives and determine whether a data center is a good fit for the jurisdiction.

- When and how do you plan to engage with residents to assess their perspectives about data center development in the jurisdiction?
- How will community perspectives be assessed and weighed (e.g., what if surveys and public comment indicate most residents do not favor development)?
- Could any public infrastructure or utility upgrades, special rates, discounted service, TIF, tax abatement, or other incentives offered to the developer/applicant shift costs or risk to existing residents, businesses, or taxing entities?

If already engaging with a developer:

- Has the community established a proposed public-facing project timeline showing key meetings, required approvals, and when residents will have meaningful opportunities to review information before any final vote?
- In agreements, is confidentiality narrowly tailored, time-limited, ensures responses to requests in a timely fashion, and structured so that the public receives meaningful information before elected officials make final land use, utility, or incentive decisions?
- Has the developer shared projections about impacts to residential water and energy rates?

Planning and Zoning

Land use authority varies, but counties typically regulate only unincorporated areas while cities control annexed land. Most local governments are understandably not fully prepared to regulate data center infrastructure, given the fast pace at which development is being proposed. Officials may choose to tap the brakes on data center development until such time as necessary modifications are made to ordinances. Thoughtful planning is key to public trust, as well as deciding *whether* a data center is a good idea for the city or county.

- Are appropriate zoning ordinances in place that address data centers (e.g., definition/category, noise, lighting, size, energy generation, waste heat, waste and materials)?
- Do current ordinances treat multiple buildings/phases under common control as one campus? Are thresholds based on building size, megawatts, water demand, backup generation, or other measurable impacts?
- Are special permits for data centers appropriate or already in place?
- Have objective, use-specific standards (i.e. caps on sound at the property line) been considered?
- Are measurable performance standards embedded in code, such as dBA (a weighted scale for judging loudness that corresponds to the hearing threshold of the human ear) and low-frequency/DBC (a way of measuring sound that captures low-frequencies that humans can't hear and dBA sound measurement doesn't register), noise limits, lighting standards, setbacks from sensitive receptors, emergency access, hazardous materials, stormwater, construction hours, and periodic post-construction testing/reporting?

- Does the code or ordinance require review of off-site power infrastructure or supporting utility (gas pipeline and/or high voltage transmission) upgrades that will affect environmental impact, and long-term capacity?
- Have impacts to adjacent properties and households been considered?

Water Resources

Some data centers use systems that are designed to be much less dependent on water (e.g., closed loop systems) than other systems. While closed loop systems are more predictable, it still may be difficult to forecast water demand for data centers. Namely, water utilities are required to provide large influxes of water but are not always given projections for when and how consistently this demand is required. A mismatch between projected peak demand and actual usage patterns creates a financial and planning burden, particularly on water utilities.

- What is the source of water for the data center?
- What amount of water will the data center need each day and each year (average day, maximum day, annual total, peak hours, and consumptive use versus water returned as wastewater or discharge)?
- What is the cooling strategy?
- What will the water be used for (drinking, industrial, non-potable)?
- How will water usage be reported?
- Would infrastructure be able to handle extra wastewater flow and the potential surge in flow to the system?
- Have water recycling processes been considered?
- What is the estimated start date of operation?
- Have seasonal or drought conditions been considered to eliminate shortages for residents as well as the data center?
- Would a higher water capacity be required for fire protection, which would require larger water infrastructure to the site (considering potential water utility impacts should they need to implement fire flow rates)?

If already engaging with a developer:

- Has a third-party regional water study or projection been undertaken that evaluates drought/low-flow conditions, competing users, utility capacity, and whether the proposed demand would affect service reliability for existing customers (ideally paid for by the developer/applicant)?
- Does a utility service agreement include conservation, curtailment, monitoring, reporting, and emergency/drought response provision?
- Is the Iowa Department of Natural Resources involved in permitting, given the large volumes of water/wastewater?
- What is the water/wastewater ramp-up schedule (usually beginning with lower demand during construction and ramping up each time a building is brought online)?

Energy Resources: Use and Governance

Communities may have questions about the high level of energy use by data center operations, which may result in competition for limited energy resources. Potential competition raises issues of grid strain and increased rates for existing customers. Grid resiliency in the face of natural disasters or extreme weather events, such as historic flooding, may also be a concern.

- What are the sources of power available to the data center?
- What amount of energy might the data center require, including megawatts at peak load?

- How will energy usage be reported?
- Will the data center use backup generation, temporary generation, on-site generation, or battery energy storage?
- Has renewable energy procurement been considered?
- What ordinances are in place that will oversee air quality emissions and noise associated with power sources?
- Will the local distribution utility conduct a rate assessment/impact study?

If already engaging with a developer:

- How many megawatts are needed, as well as transmission, substation, generation, battery or backup infrastructure and is the developer expecting to pay for those upgrades (which could affect costs or risks to other customers)?
- What is the ramp-up schedule (e.g., phased by building/campus phase, whether transmission/substation upgrades are needed)?
- How flexible or inflexible will the data center's power demand be?
- Can the data center waste heat be reused?
- Has a third-party energy study been considered (ideally paid for by the developer or applicant)?

Incentives and Economic Development

Communities may worry about power imbalances and access to resources between different sized localities, and the need to ensure that all communities have the tools they need to fairly negotiate with data center companies and developers. Coordinating regionally and setting clear expectations upfront for developers can result in communities having more influence than they sometimes realize.

- Have elected officials conducted *net* fiscal impact and economic analyses and made the decision to entice a data center to the community?
- What state and local tax exemptions or incentives apply?
- What taxing entities are affected?
- What public costs and benefits are expected?
- Are there claw backs if investment, jobs, or community benefits do not materialize?
- Is there a fund in place for decommissioning the data center at the end of its lifetime?
- Have officials considered a statewide or region-wide approach to incentives to improve outcomes for Iowa communities, residents, as well as industry?

If already engaging with a developer:

- Has a third-party (or internally conducted) economic impact assessment been undertaken that includes job creation versus tax abatements and sales tax exemptions, public infrastructure investments, unique revenue streams, and long-term labor, fiscal, and ecosystem impacts (ideally paid for by the developer or applicant)?
- Does the Development Agreement contain milestones and enforcement clauses, such as assignment/successor language (agreements should remain enforceable if the project is sold, transferred, delayed, partially built, or operated by a different entity than the original applicant/developer) or incentives tied to reporting requirements such as water use, energy consumption, etc.?
- Does the Development Agreement contain provisions tailored to the community (e.g., workforce training, broadband expansion, green-infrastructure projects, investment in local infrastructure, housing, or betterment funds to help the community as a whole)?

Thinking Ahead to the Construction Phase: During Discussions with Developers

Construction of data centers results in a large amount of activity over a lengthy period and can catch residents and community leaders by surprise unless municipalities and developers plan for disruptions during the planning and permitting phase. Communities may consider requiring a construction management plan that addresses haul routes, worker parking, laydown/staging areas, temporary power or water, dust, lighting, noise, hours of operation, complaints, and emergency access.

- What will water usage be during construction (see also “Water Resources” section)?
- Has a plan been developed or ordinance created, as well as necessary permitting obtained, for disposal of construction waste?
- Has a road use agreement been discussed or prepared, including pre-construction road condition documentation (preferably a report by a third-party, certified engineer), designated haul routes, bonding or financial assurance, repair standards, dust control measures, and post-construction restoration responsibilities?
- What noise impacts are expected during construction (e.g., What mitigation measures have been proposed? What levels are expected and when? How will potential or perceived offsite impacts to neighborhoods, schools, livestock, and wildlife be addressed?)
- What lighting impacts are expected during construction (and post-construction)?
- What is the projected length of time for construction; how many phases; how many buildings; and what size (e.g., communities may consider asking for full-buildout assumptions, phase triggers, and whether later phases require additional review if water, energy, noise, traffic, or utility impacts change)?
- Has a plan been discussed or prepared for a construction staging area?
- What considerations have been outlined to manage disruption from construction traffic (e.g., bus routes, routes for construction workers) not only for the community hosting the data center but those adjacent or likely affected by traffic?
- Is there ample housing for construction workers?

Communities have different assets, infrastructure systems, development patterns, growth goals, and resident priorities. A project that aligns well with one community's vision may not be the right fit for another. Informed, local decision-making is key.

Thank You to Our Contributors

Many Iowa cities, counties, and communities have firsthand experience evaluating, constructing, and hosting data centers and generously share their insights to help inform local decision-making across the state.

The Hubbell Environmental Law Initiative at the University of Iowa College of Law, in partnership with the University of Iowa Tippie College of Business Social Impact Community, extends sincere appreciation to the Iowa stakeholders who contributed their time, expertise, and experiences to the development of this Decision Tool.

Contributors to this Decision Tool include: Iowa State Association of Counties; Iowa League of Cities; City of Cedar Rapids Water Utility; City of Altoona; City of Norwalk; Clean Energy Districts of Iowa; Johnson County Planning, Development and Sustainability Department; Linn County Planning and Development; Civil and Environmental Engineering, College of Engineering, University of Iowa; University of Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities; University of Iowa Office of Community Engagement.

For questions regarding this Decision Tool, please contact Jennifer Terry, Hubbell Environmental Law Initiative: jennifer-terry@uiowa.edu.

Greene County, Iowa - Data Centers and Cryptocurrency Mining Centers

Zoning Ordinance Amendment Excerpt for Data Room

Status note: The amendment language below is taken from the Greene County Board of Supervisors materials. The Board approved the third and final reading on December 22, 2025; local reporting states the ordinance becomes effective after publication in the county's official newspapers.

Primary source documents:

1. Official Greene County Board of Supervisors minutes, November 17, 2025 - proposed amendment text: [Greene County minutes PDF](#)
2. Official Greene County Board of Supervisors minutes, December 1, 2025 - amended Section 16A.7.1 / first reading: [Greene County minutes PDF](#)
3. Official Greene County Board of Supervisors minutes, December 15, 2025 - second reading: [Greene County minutes PDF](#)
4. Adoption confirmation, December 22, 2025 meeting / December 26, 2025 article: [Greene County News Online](#)

Ordinance Amendment Language

AMENDMENT TO THE GREENE COUNTY ZONING ORDINANCE DEFINING DATA CENTERS AND CRYPTOCURRENCY MINING CENTERS, RESTRICTING THEIR MAXIMUM GEOGRAPHICAL SIZE AND DECIBEL LEVEL, ESTABLISHING SETBACK REQUIREMENTS, REQUIRING AN APPLICANT FOR A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT FOR THEIR CONSTRUCTION TO SUBMIT A SITE PLAN, LANDSCAPE PLAN, ICE MITIGATION PLAN, LETTER FROM THE LOCAL POWER PROVIDER, ESTIMATE OF ANNUAL WATER CONSUMPTION, PRELIMINARY EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN, PROPOSED PUBLIC DRAINAGE SYSTEM PROTECTION AGREEMENT, AND DECOMMISSIONING PLAN CONCURRENTLY WITH THE APPLICANT'S CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT APPLICATION, AND REQUIRING THE RECIPIENT OF A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT FOR THEIR CONSTRUCTION TO SUBMIT EVIDENCE OF GENERAL LIABILITY INSURANCE, A FINAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN, AND AN APPROVED DRAINAGE PROTECTION AGREEMENT PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF CONSTRUCTION IN GREENE COUNTY, IOWA

Be it ordained and enacted by the Board of Supervisors of Greene County, Iowa, as follows:

Section 1. Insert the following four subsections between subsection 3.20 and subsection 3.21 of the Greene County Zoning Ordinance:

3.20A "Cryptocurrency" means a digital or virtual currency not issued by any central authority that is designed to function as a medium of exchange and that uses encryption technology to regulate the generation of units of currency, to verify fund transfers, and to prevent counterfeiting.

3.20B "Cryptocurrency mining" means the commercial process by which cryptocurrency transactions are verified and added to the public ledger, known as the block chain, and the means through which new units of cryptocurrencies are released.

3.20C "Cryptocurrency mining center" means a data center engaged in cryptocurrency mining.

3.20D "Data center" means a permanent or temporary structure, including a cargo container or similar storage container, that houses or that provides space to house computing or networking equipment, hardware, systems, servers, appliances, or digital infrastructure related to or utilized in the storage, including cloud-based storage, management, maintenance, processing, analysis, computing, hosting, or transmission of digital data, including any accessory structures.

Section 2. Insert the following section between section 16 and section 17 of the Greene County Zoning Ordinance:

16A. Data Centers and Cryptocurrency Mining Centers

16A.1 The following standards and requirements shall govern the design, development, and placement of data centers and cryptocurrency mining centers in the County.

16A.2 Locations of Permitted Uses. Data centers and cryptocurrency mining centers are prohibited in the County except as a permitted conditional use in the following districts:

16A.2.1 "A" Agricultural Districts;

16A.2.2 "B" Commercial Districts;

16A.2.3 "C" Industrial Districts; and

16A.2.4 "F" Mineral Extraction Districts.

16A.3 The total geographical area inside the fence or wall surrounding a data center or cryptocurrency mining center shall not exceed forty (40) acres in size.

16A.4 Site Plan

16A.4.1 An applicant for a conditional use permit for the construction of a data center or cryptocurrency mining center shall submit a site plan concurrent with the applicant's conditional use permit application.

16A.4.2 The site plan shall be subject to the following development and design standards:

16A.4.2.1 Physical access to the data center or cryptocurrency mining center shall be restricted by fencing or walls. All fencing or wall details shall be provided as part of a conditional use permit application. Emergency access information to the site shall be provided to the applicable emergency management personnel.

16A.4.2.2 All applicants shall obtain all required state and federal permits prior to construction activities.

16A.4.2.3 Above-ground structures other than the fences or walls required under paragraph 16A.4.2.1 shall adhere to the following minimum setbacks; provided, however, that all landowners protected by a minimum setback may sign a waiver consenting to placement within the minimum setback, in which case the data center or cryptocurrency mining center must instead comply with the principal structure setbacks in the zoning district in which the center is located:

16A.4.2.3.1 Seventy-five (75) feet from property lines;

16A.4.2.3.2 One thousand (1,000) feet from dwelling units;

16A.4.2.3.3 Seventy-five (75) feet from right-of-way lines, including future right-of-way lines if known at the time of application;

16A.4.2.3.4 One hundred fifty (150) feet from wildlife management areas and state recreation areas;

16A.4.2.3.5 Five hundred (500) feet from buildings; and

16A.4.2.3.6 One hundred fifty (150) feet from cemeteries.

16A.4.2.4 The design of a data center or cryptocurrency mining center shall adhere to the structural height requirements of the district in which the center will be located.

16A.4.2.5 The applicant shall use commercially reasonable efforts to repair damage to private or public drainage systems caused by the construction, operation, or maintenance of a data center or cryptocurrency mining center.

16A.4.2.6 The applicant shall be responsible for on-site cleanup of all waste and scrap that is the product of construction, as well as ongoing maintenance of project property, including the disposal of trash, waste, and other detritus, for the life of the project. Any required landscaping shall be maintained as appropriate to maintain the health of the vegetation.

16A.4.2.7 The site plan shall include an estimate of the annual water consumption for the site, a statement describing the intended source of water for the site's operation, and if the water usage at the site is anticipated to exceed 15,000 gallons per month, documentation from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources affirming sufficient water resources exist to serve the site.

16A.4.2.8 The noise generated by a data center or cryptocurrency mining center shall not exceed a continuous sound level of sixty-five decibels (65 dBA) as measured from any point on the property line.

16A.5 Landscape Plan

16A.5.1 The applicant shall provide a landscape plan, which shall be submitted concurrent with the conditional use permit application.

16A.5.2 The landscape plan shall be subject to the following development and design standards:

16A.5.2.1 The landscape plan shall be prepared by a licensed landscape architect or a certified arborist.

16A.5.2.2 Existing forestation, foliage, and native flora within, near, and surrounding the project shall be preserved insofar as is practical.

16A.5.2.3 Landscaping may be required to address or mitigate visual impacts, to prevent erosion, or to manage run off.

16A.6 Emergency Response Plan

16A.6.1 The applicant shall provide a preliminary emergency response plan prepared in consultation with the Greene County Emergency Management Coordinator and the chief of the fire department in the jurisdiction in which the proposed data center or cryptocurrency mining center would be located, which shall be submitted concurrent with the conditional use permit application.

16A.6.2 The preliminary emergency response plan shall include the following information:

16A.6.2.1 Procedures for safe shutdown, de-energizing, or isolation of equipment and systems under emergency conditions to reduce the risk of fire, electric shock, and personal injuries, and for the safe start-up following cessation of emergency conditions;

16A.6.2.2 Procedures for inspection and testing of associated alarms, interlocks, and controls; and

16A.6.2.3 Procedures to be followed in response to notifications from the data center or cryptocurrency mining center or any of its components of potentially dangerous conditions, including procedures for shutting down equipment, summoning service and repair personnel, and providing notification to fire department personnel for potentially hazardous conditions.

16A.6.3 Copies of a final, site-specific, emergency response plan shall be given to the local fire department, local emergency responders, and the Greene County Emergency Management Commission prior to the construction of the data center or cryptocurrency mining center.

16A.7 Verification of Sufficient Electrical Capacity

16A.7.1 The applicant shall provide written verification from the proposed data center or cryptocurrency mining center's power provider or the power provider's supplier of electricity concurrent with the applicant's conditional use permit application confirming that the applicant will operate under an electric service agreement, the power provider's tariff requirements, or the power provider's supplier's requirements regarding the safety and sufficiency of electricity.

16A.8 Ice Mitigation Plan

16A.8.1 The applicant shall provide an ice mitigation plan concurrent with the applicant's conditional use permit application describing the policies and procedures to be followed to prevent the buildup of ice on neighboring properties and roadways.

16A.9 Public Drainage System Protection Agreement

16A.9.1 The applicant shall provide a proposed public drainage system protection agreement between the applicant and the Trustees of each and every affected drainage district prepared in consultation with the Greene County Drainage Clerk, which shall be submitted concurrent with the conditional use permit application.

16A.9.2 Construction of a data center or cryptocurrency mining center may not commence until a final public drainage system protection agreement has been negotiated and approved by the parties to each agreement.

16A.9.3 Among the terms contained in the public drainage system protection agreement, the applicant must agree to use commercially reasonable efforts to repair damage to private or public drainage systems caused by the construction, operation, or maintenance of the data center or cryptocurrency mining center.

16A.10 Signage

16A.10.1 Each data center and cryptocurrency mining center shall provide a 24-hour emergency contact sign visible at the access entrance.

16A.10.2 The emergency contact sign shall include the company name, the name of the company's owner or authorized representative, and a 24-hour telephone number.

16A.11 Insurance

16A.11.1 Evidence of general liability insurance coverage shall be submitted to the Zoning Administrator prior to the start of construction.

16A.11.2 The evidence of general liability insurance shall be in the form of a certificate of insurance satisfactory to the Zoning Administrator and shall show general liability insurance coverage for the installation and operation of the data center or cryptocurrency mining center under a standard homeowner's or businessowner's insurance policy.

16A.12 Abandonment

16A.12.1 A data center or cryptocurrency mining center will be deemed abandoned:

16A.12.1.1 If the owner or operator of the center notifies Greene County of its intention to discontinue use of the center, in which case the center will be deemed abandoned on the date of the center's discontinued use; or

16A.12.1.2 If use of the center has been discontinued for a period of one hundred eighty (180) consecutive days.

16A.12.2 Determination of the date of abandonment shall be made by the Zoning Administrator.

16A.12.3 Upon such abandonment, the owner of the center shall have two hundred seventy (270) days within which either to reactivate the center or to remove all above-ground and below-ground facilities and structures (the "decommissioning period").

16A.12.4 The owner of a data center or cryptocurrency mining center may apply to the Zoning Administrator for an extension of the decommissioning period for up to ninety (90) days to complete either the reactivation or the removal of the center as required under paragraph 16A.12.3; such an extension may be granted or denied at the discretion of the Zoning Administrator.

16A.12.5 If the owner of a data center or cryptocurrency mining center fails during the decommissioning period either to reactivate the use of the center or to remove it pursuant to paragraph 16.12.3, Greene County may remove the system and assess the costs against the owner in the same manner as a property tax, pursuant to Iowa Code section 331.384. As an alternative, the owner may prepare and submit a plan for the "banking" of the center for future reactivation and use. Said plan must be submitted to the Zoning Administrator within one hundred eighty (180) days of the abandonment of the center and shall be updated and submitted every one hundred eighty (180) days thereafter for a maximum of two (2) years, at which time the center must be reactivated or removed.

16A.13 Decommissioning Plan

16A.13.1 Each data center or cryptocurrency mining center shall have a decommissioning plan outlining the anticipated means and cost of removing the center at the end of its serviceable life or upon its abandonment.

16A.13.2 Such plan shall be submitted concurrent with the applicant's conditional use permit application.

16A.13.3 The cost estimates contained in the decommissioning plan shall be made by a competent party, such as a professional engineer, a contractor capable of decommissioning, or a person with suitable expertise or experience with decommissioning.

16A.13.4 The decommissioning plan shall also identify the financial resources that will be available to pay for decommissioning and removal of the center and any accessory facilities.

Section 3. All ordinances or parts thereof in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

Section 4. If any section, provision, sentence, clause, phrase, or part of this Amendment shall be adjudged invalid or unconstitutional, such adjudication shall not affect the validity of the Amendment as a whole or any section, provision, sentence, clause, phrase, or part not adjudged invalid or unconstitutional.

Section 5. This Amendment shall be in full force and effect from and after its final passage, approval, and publication as provided by law.

RESOLUTION NO. ____

A RESOLUTION SETTING A PUBLIC HEARING ON AMENDING TITLE 17 – ZONING OF THE DECORAH MUNICIPAL CODE; CHAPTER 17.116 REGARDING DATA CENTERS

WHEREAS, the City of Decorah recognizes that data centers represent an emerging industry that can contribute to economic development, technological advancement, property tax valuation growth, and private investment within the community; and

WHEREAS, data centers require significant electrical infrastructure, utility services, emergency response planning, and operational safeguards that warrant specific development standards to protect the public health, safety, and welfare; and

WHEREAS, the City finds that the establishment of performance standards governing utility consumption, noise, fire protection, water use, emergency preparedness, site design, and decommissioning is necessary to ensure that data centers are compatible with surrounding properties and municipal infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the City desires to encourage investment and innovation while preserving the City's natural resources, maintaining the reliability of municipal utilities, protecting neighboring property owners, and ensuring that future data center development occurs in a safe, orderly, and sustainable manner;

WHEREAS, the Municipal Code of the City of Decorah as well as the statutes of the State of Iowa require that a public hearing be conducted by the City Council and that notice of the time and place of said public hearing be published in a local newspaper; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Decorah wishes to set a public hearing on the proposed changes to City Code regarding last-mile delivery facilities.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Decorah, Iowa, as follows:

1. That a public hearing be set on proposed changes to Decorah City Code as follows:

SECTION 1. PURPOSE.

The purpose of this Ordinance is to establish regulations for the development, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of data centers within the City of Decorah in a manner that promotes economic development while protecting public health, safety, welfare, municipal infrastructure, utility resources, environmental quality, and neighboring properties.

SECTION 2. CHAPTER 17.116.020 – PRINCIPAL PERMITTED USES.

Chapter 17.116.020, Principal Permitted Uses, is hereby amended by adding the following permitted use:

"Data Centers, subject to the standards established in Section 17.116.100."

SECTION 3. NEW SECTION 17.116.100 – DATA CENTER STANDARDS.

The following section is added to Chapter 17.116:

17.116.100 DATA CENTERS.

A. Definitions.

1. Data Center. A building or facility housing networked computer servers, storage systems, communications equipment, and associated infrastructure used to process, store, manage, or disseminate digital information.
2. Large Data Center. A data center with a maximum electrical demand exceeding three (3) megawatts.
3. Micro Data Center. A data center with a maximum electrical demand of three (3) megawatts or less.
4. Cryptocurrency Mining. The commercial process by which cryptocurrency transactions are verified and added to a blockchain and through which cryptocurrency is generated.
5. Cryptocurrency Mining Center. A data center primarily engaged in cryptocurrency mining operations.

B. Applicability.

All new data centers and cryptocurrency mining centers and expansions of existing data centers and cryptocurrency mining centers located within the M-3 General Industrial District shall comply with the requirements of this section.

C. Water Use and Cooling Systems.

1. Data centers shall not utilize groundwater wells or surface water sources for cooling purposes unless specifically approved by the City Council following review by the Water Department and Public Works Director.
2. Air-cooled or closed-loop cooling systems shall be utilized.
3. The applicant shall submit projected water demand calculations and a water conservation plan.
4. No discharge of any measurable contaminants outside of the system.

D. Utility Capacity Analysis.

Prior to issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall provide written verification from the serving utility demonstrating:

1. Anticipated maximum electrical demand;
2. Available utility capacity;
3. Required utility infrastructure improvements; and
4. Identification of any impacts on municipal utility operations.

E. Site Plan Requirements.

A site plan shall be submitted for review and approval and shall include:

1. Fencing and security measures;
2. Landscaping plan;
3. Exterior lighting plan;
4. Utility infrastructure;
5. Stormwater management facilities;
6. Emergency access routes; and
7. Project construction timeline.
8. All other provisions required under Chapter 17.36 – SITE PLANS

F. Setbacks.

1. Buildings housing data center operations shall maintain a minimum setback of five hundred (500) feet from any residential zoning district.
2. Backup generators, substations, and cooling equipment shall maintain a minimum setback of seven hundred-fifty (750) feet from any residential zoning district.
3. Greater setbacks may be required where necessary to mitigate noise, vibration, or visual impacts.

4. Site shall not be within 1,000' of a natural waterway, public waterways, water source, or USGS identified sink holes.
5. Site shall not be within 1,000' of 500-year flood plain.
6. A Contaminated Water Plan for any potential surface or subsurface water contamination must be submitted and approved.

G. Noise Standards.

1. Noise generated by the data center and associated equipment shall not exceed:
 - a. Fifty-five (55) dBA measured at the property line adjacent to a residential zoning district; or
 - b. Sixty (60) dBC measured at the same location.
2. Applicants shall provide manufacturer noise specifications and, upon request by the City, post-construction sound testing demonstrating compliance.

H. Backup Power Systems.

1. A Backup Power Plan shall be submitted describing:
 - a. Number and size of generators;
 - b. Fuel type and storage;
 - c. Testing schedule;
 - d. Emission control measures; and
 - e. Emergency operating procedures.
2. Diesel generators shall comply with all applicable federal and state emission standards.
3. Backup power equipment shall be screened from public view to the extent practicable.

I. Fire Protection and Emergency Preparedness.

1. Facilities shall comply with the latest adopted editions of NFPA 75 and NFPA 76.
2. A Fire Safety Compliance Plan shall be submitted and approved prior to occupancy.
3. The owner shall provide annual coordination meetings with the Decorah Fire Department and emergency management officials. An Emergency Operations Plan shall be maintained on-site and provided to emergency responders.

Any specialized equipment necessary for emergency response not currently owned by Decorah Fire Department must be provided.

J. Security.

1. Facilities shall be enclosed by security fencing.
2. Controlled access systems and twenty-four-hour monitoring shall be maintained.
3. Warning signage identifying emergency contacts and hazards shall be posted.

K. Exterior Lighting.

1. All outdoor lighting shall utilize full cutoff fixtures.
2. Lighting shall be directed downward and shielded from adjoining properties.

L. Landscaping.

1. Landscaping shall be provided around the perimeter of the facility where visible from public streets or adjacent non-industrial properties.
2. Combustible vegetation shall be maintained in accordance with applicable fire codes.

M. Roadway Protection.

Where construction activities are expected to generate extraordinary heavy truck traffic, the City may require:

1. A haul route plan;
2. Pre-construction documentation of roadway conditions; and
3. Repair of damage attributable to construction activities.

N. Decommissioning.

1. A Decommissioning Plan shall be submitted prior to issuance of a building permit.
2. The plan shall identify:
 - a. Anticipated facility life;
 - b. Removal procedures;

- c. Waste disposal methods;
 - d. Site restoration procedures; and
 - e. Estimated decommissioning costs.
3. If a facility ceases operation for a continuous period of twelve (12) months, the City may require decommissioning of the facility.
- O. Cryptocurrency Mining Centers.
- 1. Cryptocurrency mining centers shall comply with all requirements applicable to data centers.
 - 2. Cryptocurrency mining centers shall submit documentation demonstrating compliance with all noise standards under this section.
 - 3. The City may require additional noise attenuation measures where necessary to protect surrounding properties.
2. That the public hearing be held on Monday, September 21, 2026 at 5:45 PM at the Council Chambers in City Hall in Decorah, Iowa, and the City Clerk/Finance Officer is hereby authorized to publish notice of a public hearing on the proposed amendment.
3. At said public hearing, public comment may be taken by the City Council on the proposed zoning amendment.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this ____ day of _____, 2026.

CITY OF DECORAH, IOWA

Frederic A. Carlson, Mayor

ATTEST:

Keri Sand, City Clerk-Finance Officer

Moved By:
Seconded By:
Roll Call Vote
Ayes:
Nays:

ORDINANCE NO. _____

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 165 “ZONING REGULATIONS” OF THE
CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF PALO, IOWA**

SECTION I. PURPOSE. The purpose of this ordinance is to amend Chapter 165 to include an exclusive use district for data centers.

SECTION II. SECTION ADDED. Section 165.16A of the Palo, Iowa Code of Ordinances is hereby added as follows.

165.16A EU-1 DATA CENTER EXCLUSIVE USE DISTRICT

The purpose of the EU-1 Data Center Exclusive Use District is to provide a clear, comprehensive, and predictable regulatory framework for the siting and operation of large and small data centers within the City of Palo.

1. Permitted Principal Use
 - A. Data centers
2. Permitted Accessory Uses and Structures.
 - A. Battery energy storage systems (BESS).
 - B. Solar arrays and other similar on-site renewable power generation systems.
 - C. On-site standby or backup power generation.
 - D. Electrical substations, switchyards, or power distribution equipment.
 - E. District energy or microgrid infrastructure.
 - F. Water treatment and recycling facilities.
 - G. Office, maintenance, and employee support facilities incidental to the data center.
3. Major Site Plan Required. A major site plan shall be submitted and reviewed prior to the approval of a data center. A data center shall require rezoning to the EU-1 District, unless it is already located within the EU-1 District.
4. Additional Information.
 - A. The following information shall be submitted on the major site plan, or in narrative form, supplied by the applicant with any application for rezoning to the EU-1 District:
 - (1) Legal description of all parcels of real property leased and/or owned, that are identified to be part of the project area.
 - (2) A description of the project including development timeline, location of buildings, parking, and approximate number of employees.

B. The following information shall be submitted prior to issuance of the first building permit for the data center:

- (1) Planned location of underground or overhead electric lines, grid interconnection points, project entrances, staging areas, and access roads required during construction and post construction.
- (2) Written verification from the proposed power provider that the applicant has verified the utility supply can be accommodated for the applicant's proposed use.
- (3) Lighting Plan. A lighting plan shall be submitted providing details of the light spread and intensity diagrams, fixture specifications, and mounting height details. Any lighting used for outdoor illumination on the property shall be full-cutoff fixtures so that light does not shine upward or adversely impact adjoining properties.
- (4) The applicant acknowledges that permits for generators and related equipment are issued by Linn County, Iowa. The applicant shall simultaneously provide to the City complete copies of all applications, plans, and supporting materials submitted to Linn County for such permits, including any revisions or supplements thereto. The plan shall demonstrate that the proposed data center will comply with all applicable local, county, state, and federal permitting requirements..
- (5) Road use agreement. An approved Road Use Agreement containing the information and conditions specified in Section 165.16A(11) is required before the start of construction.
- (6) Pre-construction noise analysis. Completed analysis shall be submitted in accordance with 165.16A(12).
- (7) Emergency Response Plan. The applicant shall submit an emergency response plan as described in 165.16A(16).

- (8) Site and structure requirements, including:
 - (a) Stormwater management plan.
 - (b) Stormwater pollution prevention plan.
 - (c) Erosion and sediment control plan.
 - (d) All Data Center production equipment (computers, servers, etc.) shall comply with Building Code requirements. Said structure(s) shall be placed on a permanent foundation.
 - (9) Economic Development Agreement. If incentives are requested by the Applicant, the applicant shall enter into an Economic Development Agreement ("EDA") with the City, approved by the City Council as described in Section 165.16A(15).
 - (10) For any data center facility consisting of one or more buildings (whether constructed simultaneously or in separate phases), the applicant shall not be required to submit or resubmit the items referenced in Sections 165.16A(4)(B)(1)-(9) as to any building or phase of buildings constructed after the initial building permit is issued, if such building or phase of buildings were contemplated on the relevant submission delivered under said Sections 165.16A(4)(B)(1)-(9) in connection with the first building permit issued for the data center and the scope and footprint of the project has not substantially changed from the time of initial submission.
5. Required setbacks.
- A. 200 feet to property lines.
 - B. 1,000 feet (measured from the closest outer wall of the closest building on the data center property) to the closest outer wall of a place of public assembly (existing at the time the property is rezoned for data center uses) and 1,000 feet (measured from the closest outer wall of the closest building on the data center property) to the property line of any residentially zoned property. "Residentially zoned property" does not include non-conforming residential properties in non-residential zoning districts.
6. Street access. The site shall have access to a hard surfaced road of sufficient capacity to accommodate the traffic that the use will generate, with continuous hard surfaced connection to a City Street or state or federal highway.
7. Access. Vehicular access points shall create a minimum of conflict with through traffic movement.
8. Parking. Off-street parking and loading areas shall be required according to the following provisions.

A. Off-Street loading areas. The following off-street loading areas shall be provided and maintained for data centers.

- (1) There shall be at least one off-street loading berth for each data center building; and
- (2) In addition to the minimum berth, additional off-street loading berths shall be provided when any of the following thresholds are met. The number of additional berths required shall be determined as follows:
 - (a) Delivery/Service Trip Volume (30+ foot vehicles). One additional off-street loading berth shall be provided for each increment of ten (10) delivery/service vehicle trips per business day, involving vehicles exceeding thirty (30) feet in length, above a baseline of ten (10) such trips per business day. (Example: 0–10 trips/day = no additional berth; 11–20 trips/day = 1 additional berth; 21–30 trips/day = 2 additional berths; etc).
 - (b) Tractor-Trailer Deliveries. One (1) additional off-street loading berth shall be provided if the facility is projected or documented to receive more than three (3) tractor-trailer deliveries in a day on a recurring basis, and an additional berth shall be provided for each additional increment of three (3) tractor-trailer deliveries per day on a recurring basis. (Example: 0–3 deliveries/day = no additional berth; 4–6 deliveries/day = 1 additional berth; 7–9 deliveries/day = 2 additional berths; etc).
 - (c) Security Checkpoint. Where a gated entrance, guardhouse, or security checkpoint is provided, the applicant shall demonstrate that delivery/service vehicles can queue entirely on-site without obstructing the public right-of-way. If the applicant cannot meet this standard, additional loading capacity or on-site staging/stacking shall be required as determined by the Zoning Administrator.
- (3) When thresholds in subsection (A)(2) would require additional berths, Zoning Administrator may approve an alternative compliance plan in lieu of some or all additional berths, upon finding that the alternative will prevent on-street loading and off-site queuing and will not interfere with fire lanes or emergency access. Alternatives may include, without limitation:
 - (a) Scheduled delivery windows and appointment-only deliveries;
 - (b) a designated on-site staging/laydown area for short-term loading activity;
 - (c) reconfiguration of circulation or stacking to avoid spillback; or

(d) shared loading arrangements, where permitted, supported by a recorded easement or enforceable agreement.

B. Off-Street loading area design standards. Required off-street loading areas shall meet the following design standards;

- (1) Size. Each loading berth shall not be less than 15 feet in width, 60 feet in length, and 15 feet in height.
- (2) Location. Such berth may occupy part of a required yard space, however, required off-street loading areas shall not occupy required buffer areas between data center lots and adjacent non-commercial or non-industrial lots, and no berth shall be constructed in the required side yard of a building that is adjacent to a residential district.

C. Off-Street parking areas required. In areas of data center development, off-street parking shall be required based on 1.50 spaces per each full-time permanent employee.

D. Off-Street parking area design standards. Required off-street parking areas shall meet the following design standards.

- (1) Parking space size. Each parking space shall contain a minimum area of not less than 300 square feet including parking stall area, backup area and aisle area. Parking stalls shall have a width of not less than 9 feet, and depth of not less than 18 feet.
- (2) Handicapped parking. Off-street parking areas shall be designed to meet the number, placement, size and marking and identification requirements for handicapped parking contained in 42 USC 12181-9 and I.C.A. §321L.5.
- (3) Computation. When determination of the number of off-street parking spaces required by this chapter results in a requirement of a fractional space, the number of spaces shall be rounded up to the next whole number. Parking spaces required on an employee basis shall be based on the maximum number of employees on duty or residing, or both, on the premises at any one time.
- (4) Access. Where a lot does not abut a public or private alley or easement of access there shall be provided an access drive not less than 18 feet in width leading to the loading and unloading space and parking or storage areas required hereunder in such manner as to secure the most appropriate development of the property in question.
- (5) Surfacing, Grading, Drainage. All drives and parking areas are to be paved with an asphaltic concrete pavement, or such other hard but permeable pavement.

- (6) Marking and delineation. Marking and delineation of off-street parking areas shall be required.
 - (7) Maintenance. Off-street parking areas shall be maintained in good condition and any required marking, surfacing, grading and drainage shall meet the conditions of approval on an on-going basis.
- 9. Buffers. A buffer shall be provided when a data center abuts non-commercial or non-industrial land uses or zoning districts. A buffer shall not be required where the data center site is separated from abutting property by a natural feature that functions as an effective visual and physical barrier similar to the below requirements, including but not limited to rivers with defined bed and banks, substantial wooded areas, or similar natural landforms, as determined by the Zoning Administrator or their designee.
 - A. The buffer shall be a minimum of 50 feet. The buffer width may be reduced by up to ten percent by requesting a variance from the Board of Adjustment. A variance may be granted when, because of an exceptional situation, topographical condition, surroundings, size, shape or other condition of the property, the strict application of the buffer width provision would result in practical difficulties for the owner of such property.
 - B. All buffer areas shall be landscaped or fenced to provide visual screen, and shall not include any structures other than allowed fencing, parking areas, storage areas, playgrounds, or other similar facilities.
 - (1) Fencing may be used to meet the buffer requirement but shall not exceed 50 percent of the total buffer distance required, provided fence height shall not exceed 12 feet. Height, for the purpose of meeting the requirements of this subsection, shall be measured from the ground surface to the highest point of the fence. Setback requirements shall not apply to fences.
 - (2) Landscaping shall use any combination of berms, native plants and tree species to achieve a visual buffer no less than 25 feet in height. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the 25 feet minimum height of the landscaping can be measured at maturity provided that tree species shall have a height of at least 6 feet within three years of installation. Berms must be vegetated to minimize erosion and to slow stormwater runoff.
 - (3) Visual screening shall be measured under leaf-on conditions and shall be measured from the elevation of the shared property line.
 - (4) Buffer areas may include drainage swales, stormwater retention or infiltration areas, or other stormwater management areas only if landscaping and visual screening requirements can also be met.

- (5) Lot frontage on a public street shall be separated from the edge of the abutting property line by a landscaped yard of at least 20 feet in width, except where driveway accesses occur.
- (6) All buffer areas shall be kept free of litter, debris, noxious weeds, and species of plants identified by the state IDNR as exotic or invasive.

10. Sewer and Water Connections. Applicants shall adhere to the City code sections pertaining to Sewer and Water Systems, including but not limited to Chapter 90 (Water Service), Chapter 92 (Water Meters), Chapter 92 (Water Rates), Chapter 93 (Water Conservation), Chapter 95 (Sanitary Sewer System), Chapter 96 (Building Sewers and Connections), Chapter 97 (Use of Public Sewers) and Chapter 99 (Sewer Service Charges), as amended. All connections, usage, construction, materials, design standards, fees, and rates shall conform to City requirements and adopted schedules.

- A. Any extensions, upgrades, upsizing, or other additional infrastructure required to provide water and/or sanitary sewer service to the applicant or required to accommodate the applicant's proposed use or demand, shall be the sole responsibility of the applicant and shall be memorialized in a development agreement between the applicant and the city. Such responsibility includes all costs associated with planning, engineering, design, permitting, inspection, construction, and installation, whether the improvements are located on-site or within the public right-of-way, unless otherwise expressly agreed to in writing by the city.
- B. Applicants shall utilize the City water supply and sanitary sewer systems for domestic demands when service is available, in accordance with City Code requirements. Alternative water supply or wastewater disposal systems may only be used when connection to the City system is determined to be not feasible, as mutually agreed upon by the applicant and the City.
- C. Applicants may apply to use City water and/or sanitary sewer services for industrial, commercial, or process-related demands, but such use is not required. If the applicant elects to use City water and/or sewer services for these demands, the applicant shall be fully responsible for all additional infrastructure, system improvements, capacity upgrades, pretreatment requirements, and related costs necessary to support such use, including all planning, design, and construction costs, and shall pay all applicable rates and charges established by the City.

11. Avoidance and mitigation of damages to public infrastructure.

- A. Roads. Applicants shall identify all roads planned to be used for the purpose of transporting equipment for construction, operation, or maintenance of the data center and obtain applicable weight and size permits from the impacted road authority prior to construction.

- B. Existing road conditions. Applicant shall conduct and provide evidence of a pre-construction roadway conditions survey, in coordination with the City's Public Works Department and City Engineer, to determine baseline road conditions and authority. The survey shall adequately document all road, road right of way, and public drainage infrastructure conditions requested for use during all phases of construction.
- C. Transportation Impact Analysis. Applicants shall submit a transportation impact analysis prepared by a licensed engineer detailing how the proposed data center development will impact the surrounding roadway network during and after construction. Roadways to be included shall not be limited to the roads within the City, the study shall be comprehensive of all roads to be impacted outside of the interstate system. Key intersections and corridors to be evaluated shall be discussed with the City Public Works Department and City Engineer prior to performing the analysis. The review shall address, at a minimum, capacity, delay, safety impacts, site access design, internal circulation, multimodal accommodations and anticipated trip generation based on industry-standard methodologies. The analysis shall recommend mitigation measures such as turn lanes, signal installation or timing adjustments, or roadway upgrades to ensure the transportation system can safely and efficiently accommodate the added demand. The report shall detail the timeline of improvements needed based on construction activities and anticipated full-time traffic volumes at the end of construction. Information from this analysis shall be used in determining the requirements of the road use agreement.
- D. Road Use Agreement. An approved Road Use Agreement containing the information and conditions specified in this section is required before the start of construction. Applicants shall enter into a Road Use Agreement with the City that clearly details responsibilities for on-going road maintenance and dust control measures for all identified City streets during all phases of construction. The Road Use Agreement may require certain applicant undertakings, including but not limited to providing financial assurance in the form of an irrevocable letter of credit, bond, cash, escrow, parent guarantee, or other form of security or guaranty acceptable to the City. At construction completion, applicant shall, unless otherwise provided in the applicable Road Use Agreement, conduct and provide evidence of a post construction roadway conditions survey, in accordance with the Road Use Agreement and in coordination with the City's Public Works Department and City Engineer, to verify that road conditions, to the extent impacted by applicant's use in the construction of its data center, have been restored, as far as reasonably practical, to pre-construction conditions or as otherwise required by the Road Use Agreement.
- E. Drainage system. The applicant shall be responsible for repair of damage to public drainage systems stemming from construction, operation, or maintenance of the data

center. Applicant shall acknowledge any damage to public drainage systems and the responsibility for repair in a timely manner within 72 hours of damage discovery.

12. Noise Analysis. No operating data center equipment shall produce decibel levels exceeding any of the following limitations except during initial construction and routine maintenance. Adequate setbacks and effective sound mitigating equipment shall be used to comply with these limitations:
- A. The average hourly noise level shall not exceed 55 dBA or 65 dBC as measured from the outer wall of any occupied structure within residentially zoned property adjacent to the proposed development. For property adjacent to the proposed development that is not residentially zoned, the average hourly noise level shall not exceed 65 dBA or 75 dBC as measured from the outer wall of any occupied structure. The average decibel limit is specific to source of the sound and does not count against cumulative ambient decibel levels as established in a baseline acoustic evaluation.
 - B. Equipment testing, maintenance activities, and construction activities that generate elevated noise, including generator testing, shall be limited to the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, unless otherwise approved by the Mayor or his/her designee. City approval for excessive noise generation shall not be unreasonably withheld.
 - C. The average hourly decibel level may be exceeded during short-term events such as severe windstorms.
 - D. A pre-construction and post-construction noise evaluation shall be completed by a certified professional by the Institute of Noise Control Engineering (INCE), or a licensed Professional Engineer (PE) to verify compliance with the City's standards. The post-construction noise evaluation shall be completed after completion of all planned data center buildings at the end of construction (as defined in Sections 165.16A(12)(E)).
 - E. Commencing on the fifth anniversary of the end of construction, as defined hereafter, and continuing every 5 years thereafter, for so long as the data center operates, a noise evaluation shall be completed at the operators expense by a certified professional by the Institute of Noise Control Engineering (INCE), or a licensed professional engineer (PE) to verify compliance with the City's standards in Sections 165.16A(12)(A). Completion of all data center buildings, or end of construction, means the date on which all of the following have occurred: completion of construction of the data center or, in the case of a phased or multi-building campus, all buildings of the multi-building data center campus, and issuance of a certificate of occupancy for all related buildings; and the data center operator has communicated, in writing, to the Mayor or his/her designee that it has completed the data center campus; provided, that, if all construction has

stopped on the property for more than 6 consecutive calendar months, other than due to delays by the City in processing related permits or approvals, then “end of construction” as used herein shall be deemed to have occurred as of the last day of such calendar month. This 6-month time frame may be extended by the mayor or his/her designee.

- F. The owner(s) of adjacent property may voluntarily agree, by written and recorded waiver, to a higher average hourly decibel level than those allowed within this subsection. This agreement must be recorded with the office of the Linn County Recorder so that future owners of the property are on notice of the agreement.

13. **Water Supply.** The Applicant shall obtain all necessary Water Use Permits from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). The issuance of Water Use Permits by the IDNR shall serve as demonstration that there is a sufficient reliable water supply to meet all projected water demands without undue adverse impacts on existing users, aquifers or surface waters. To assist in the City’s assurance the applicant must also comply with the following requirements:

- A. The applicant shall submit the Water Use Permits to the City three weeks prior to submitting an application to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources for a Water Use Permit. This advance submission is to allow the City time to review and provide comment to the State during the applicable review and public comment process.
- B. The applicant shall share the same water information with the City that it shares on a monthly and annual basis with IDNR. Coordination is necessary during periods of water supply constraint, drought, and emergency conditions, and applicant shall act strictly in accordance with the priority allocation and restriction mandates issued by the IDNR or the State of Iowa pursuant to Chapter 50 of Part 567 of the Iowa Administrative Code and Subchapter III, Part 4, Chapter 455B of the Iowa Code and any other relevant local ordinance as amended. The applicant shall demonstrate coordination with the IDNR regarding applicable Water Use Permits, interference mitigation procedures, monitoring obligations, and compliance procedures. Demonstration of this coordination shall be, at a minimum, by supplying all documents submitted to the IDNR simultaneously to the City. Notwithstanding anything in this Section to the contrary, the applicant may redact confidential or proprietary information from any submission hereunder consistent with Chapter 22 of the Iowa Code.

14. **Water Quality Review.** The Applicant shall obtain all necessary National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits required through the IDNR, both Individual and General. Application documents shall be submitted to the City at the same time as to the IDNR to allow the City time to provide the IDNR any comments during the review process. Also, once a permit has been issued the City shall be copied on any

compliance documentation submitted to the IDNR for the duration of the permitted activities.

15. Economic Development Agreement. Prior to issuance of the first building permit for the data center and in the event the applicant requests incentives, the applicant of a data center shall enter into an Economic Development Agreement (“EDA”) with the City, approved by the City Council. The purpose of the EDA is to establish ongoing cooperation between the City and the project operator, a description of any applicable incentives that the project operator will receive (subject to the terms of the EDA), and to provide ongoing contributions that advance the City’s fiscal, infrastructure, and community goals related to hosting data center facilities. The City shall retain full reasonable discretion to determine the form, structure, and use of funds or benefits provided under any EDA. In the event the applicant does not request any incentives then this section shall not apply. Notwithstanding the foregoing, in the event the applicant is within 1,000 feet (measured from the closest outer wall of the closest building on the data center property) to the property line of any residentially zoned property, (“Residentially zoned property” does not include non-conforming residential properties in non-residential zoning districts) the applicant shall consider implementing a Property Value Protection Plan. The purpose of the Property Value Protection Plan is to address potential impacts to nearby residential property values associated with the development and operation of the data center. Nothing in this section shall limit the City’s authority to negotiate terms appropriate to the scale, location, and nature of a specific project, or to enter into separate agreements addressing road use, infrastructure improvements, or other matters related to the development of the data center.
16. Emergency Response Plan. The applicant shall submit an emergency response plan prior to any ground disturbance at the project site detailing the planned response actions that will be taken by facility representatives in the event of an emergency. These actions are intended to minimize health risks to personnel and people in the surrounding community, as well as minimize adverse impacts to the environment. The emergency response plan shall also identify the applicants’ actions when sustained drought conditions are incurred.
 - A. The plan shall include, but is not limited to, a detailed narrative of response procedures and the facility representatives responsible for management of the following plausible contingencies that could occur at the facility: natural disaster/severe weather, fire, security incident, capacity/transmission, environmental, chemical, pipeline (if applicable), sustained drought or water supply shortages, and medical. It shall include procedures for a site evacuation, designated egress routes, and emergency staging areas.
 - B. The plan shall include a stand-alone section detailing the emergency response protocols specific to battery energy storage areas (if applicable).

- C. The plan shall include a stand-alone section detailing the emergency response protocols specific to times of sustained drought conditions or water supply shortages. Surface water monitoring gauges and groundwater monitoring wells may be established to serve as indicators of water supply shortages. The plan should include specific water level triggers that will indicate emergency response actions.
 - D. The plan shall be developed in coordination with local first responders, City Staff and Linn County Emergency Management.
 - E. Notwithstanding anything in this Section to the contrary, the applicant may redact confidential or proprietary information from any submission hereunder.
17. Notification Requirements. To assist in providing adequate notice to interested parties, the applicant for a rezoning to the EU-1 District shall:
- A. Within 14 days of filing the rezoning application with the zoning administrator, mail a notice via first class mail to property owners and tenants within 1,000 feet of the subject site explaining the request and identifying the subject property.
 - B. Prior to the application being heard at the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting, the applicant shall host a public informational meeting held at a location reasonably accessible to all identified property owners. Applicants must mail a notice of the public informational meeting via first class mail to property owners and tenants within 1,000 feet of the subject site.
 - (1) Applicants must submit a list of the property owners and tenants contacted, a copy of the notice sent, and a notarized affidavit stipulating to the mailing to the City Clerk.

SECTION III. SECTION MODIFIED. Section 165.02 of the Palo, Iowa Code of Ordinances is hereby modified to include the following additional definitions:

“Data center” means a building, structure, or facility, or group of buildings or structures, whose primary purpose is the centralized storage, processing, management, or transmission of digital data or information through computer servers or telecommunications equipment. A data center may include server farms, cloud computing facilities, colocation facilities, and similar uses.

“Places of public assembly means buildings or facilities where people gather for civic, educational, religious, or cultural purposes, including, but not limited to retirement and nursing homes, schools, childcare homes and centers, group homes, hospitals, detention facilities, or human service facilities, not including facilities allowed as an accessory use to the principal use in question.

SECTION IV. REPEALER. All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict with this ordinance are hereby repealed.

SECTION IV. SEVERABILITY. If any section, provision or part of this ordinance shall be adjudged invalid or unconstitutional, such adjudication shall not affect the validity of the ordinance as a whole or any section, provision, or part thereof not adjudged invalid or unconstitutional.

SECTION V. EFFECTIVE DATE. This ordinance shall be in effect after its final passage, approval and publication as provided by law.

PASSED AND APPROVED this ____ day of _____ 2026.

Bryan Busch, Mayor

ATTEST:

Jennifer Fencel, City Clerk

First Reading:

Second Reading:

Third Reading:

Final Approval Given:

I certify that the foregoing was published as Ordinance No. _____ on _____,
2026

Jennifer Fencel, City Clerk

JACKSON COUNTY ORDINANCE # _____
HIGH-DENSITY COMPUTING FACILITIES (HDCF) ORDINANCE

Be it enacted by the Board of Supervisors of Jackson County, Iowa:

This ordinance is adopted pursuant to the powers granted to counties under Iowa Code Chapters 331 and 335, and in accordance with Iowa Code § 331.302, which authorizes counties to enact ordinances and to incorporate by reference applicable state and federal regulations or technical standards.

It is the intent of the Jackson County Board of Supervisors that this ordinance operate in harmony with all applicable state and federal laws, rules, regulations, codes, permits, and technical standards, including but not limited to the Iowa Administrative Code, the Iowa Code, and nationally recognized standards such as NFPA, ANSI, and IEC.

All referenced codes and standards shall be deemed to include their most current versions, as amended from time to time, as provided in Section 17(E) of this ordinance.

Compliance with these standards does not supersede, duplicate, or limit the authority of the State Fire Marshal, IDNR, or any other agency having jurisdiction under applicable law.

Section 1. Purpose and Intent

This ordinance is adopted under the authority of Iowa Code Chapters 331 and 335 for the purpose of protecting the public health, safety, and welfare of Jackson County residents. This ordinance is adopted in accordance with and in furtherance of the Jackson County Land Use Policy and the Jackson County Comprehensive Plan.

The purpose of this ordinance is to regulate the siting and land use impacts of High-Density Computing Facilities (HDCFs) in order to promote compatibility with surrounding land uses, protect public infrastructure, preserve agricultural land and natural resources, and reduce the risk of adverse impacts associated with the siting, construction, and operation of such facilities.

Because HDCFs may involve substantial electrical demand, continuous equipment operation, cooling systems, and large-scale site improvements, these regulations are intended to ensure that such uses are considered only in appropriate locations and under standards addressing location, setbacks, site design, infrastructure coordination, resource protection, and decommissioning.

These regulations are further intended to support orderly development patterns and discourage scattered or incompatible rural industrial development consistent with the Jackson County Land Use Policy and Comprehensive Plan.

Section 2. Definitions

Abatement. Any corrective action taken to reduce, mitigate, or eliminate an identified violation of this ordinance, including but not limited to operational adjustments, physical modifications, removal of violating materials or equipment, site restoration, or other corrective action authorized by law.

Abandoned Facility. A facility that ceases active operations for more than one (1) year without written notice to the County and without an approved plan to return the facility to active operation, unless cessation is due to force majeure, utility outage, court order, or an approved temporary suspension.

Accessory Use. A use or structure incidental and subordinate to the principal facility on the same parcel and serving a function customarily associated with the principal use.

Board of Adjustment (BOA). The Jackson County Board of Adjustment as established under Chapter 4 of the Jackson County Zoning Ordinance.

Closed-Loop Cooling System. A cooling system that recirculates coolant within a sealed system and does not rely on continuous withdrawal or discharge of groundwater or surface water during normal operation.

Conditional Use Permit (CUP). The Board of Adjustment approval authorizing a High-Density Computing Facility as a conditional use under the Jackson County Zoning Ordinance. If the then-current zoning ordinance uses a different term (e.g., "Special Exception") for Board of Adjustment land-use approval, the term CUP in this ordinance shall be construed to mean the applicable Board of Adjustment approval.

Corn Suitability Rating (CSR2). A soil-productivity index for Iowa farmland used to compare the relative suitability of soils for row-crop production. CSR2 information, when required by this ordinance, shall be provided in a map and summary format acceptable to the Zoning Administrator.

Expansion or Modification. Any structural, mechanical, or electrical addition or alteration that increases total electrical service load, physical footprint, or operating noise beyond that authorized under the most recent zoning permit or Board of Adjustment approval.

Fully Enclosed Building. A permanent structure with a roof and four (4) fully enclosed walls. Doors and openings shall remain closed except for normal ingress/egress and maintenance. Roofed canopies, partially enclosed buildings, or screened enclosures do not qualify.

High-Density Computing Facility (HDCF). A facility or group of structures housing servers, computer clusters, processors, or similar computing equipment that is designed, proposed, or operated at a total electrical service load of six hundred (600) amps or greater and/or an energy-use intensity of two hundred fifty (250) kWh per square foot per year or greater, as identified in application materials, utility-service documentation, or other information acceptable to the Zoning Administrator.

Examples include cryptocurrency mining, artificial-intelligence training, data-processing, cloud-computing, or similar computational operations. Thresholds are based on regional utility data showing step-change impacts to local grid reliability above this service level.

The term includes facilities commonly referred to as data centers, cryptocurrency mining operations, or similar computing-intensive uses, whether primary or accessory in nature.

Hydro-Cooling System. A closed-loop or water-based heat-exchange system used for temperature control of computing equipment.

Known Mapped Sensitive Area. A sensitive environmental, cultural, hydrologic, scenic, or geologic resource identified in County, state, or federal mapping, records, or adopted plans, including but not limited to wetlands, floodplains, sinkholes, karst features, protected water resources, conservation areas, mapped burial mound or archaeological sensitivity areas, bluffs, scenic byway viewsheds, or other mapped natural-resource areas.

Noise Level (dBA). Sound-pressure level measured with an A-weighted filter and slow-response time constant in accordance with ANSI S12.9 (Parts 1 & 3) and IEC 61672-1 (Type 1 sound-level meter) standards.

Nonparticipating Parcel. A parcel that is not owned, leased, controlled, or otherwise subject to a written agreement with the High-Density Computing Facility applicant, owner, or operator for purposes of siting, construction, operation, setback, access, or related project approval. *[Revised from 5/18/2026 draft]*

Occupied Structure. Any building or structure designed for or regularly used by humans or livestock for habitation, employment, assembly, education, worship, or shelter, whether permanent or seasonal.

Operator. The individual, company, partnership, corporation, or other legal entity that owns, leases, or controls the operation, maintenance, and regulatory compliance of a High-Density Computing Facility.

Owner. The person, partnership, corporation, trust, or other legal entity holding title to the real property on which a High-Density Computing Facility is located, as recorded with the County Recorder.

Peak Particle Velocity (PPV). The maximum instantaneous velocity of ground vibration, expressed in millimeters per second (mm/s), as measured by a tri-axial accelerometer per DIN 4150-3 or BS 7385-2 standards.

Road Use Agreement (RUA). A written agreement between the facility operator/applicant and the Jackson County Engineer (or other road authority having jurisdiction), establishing designated haul routes, access points, traffic control measures, and the operator's obligations for maintenance, repair, and restoration of public road infrastructure impacted by facility-related traffic.

Surface Water. Any water body located on the surface of the land, including rivers, streams, creeks, ponds, lakes, drainageways, wetlands and other waters regulated by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR).

Utility Provider. The electric utility (including an investor-owned public utility, municipal utility, or electric cooperative) that is lawfully authorized to provide retail electric service to the subject property, or its designated agent, and that will supply primary electrical power to the High-Density Computing Facility.

Utility Service Coordination Letter. Written documentation from the applicable Utility Provider, or other documentation acceptable to the Zoning Administrator, confirming that the applicant has contacted the Utility Provider regarding the proposed facility's anticipated electrical service needs and identifying any known service extensions, upgrades, easements, substations, transmission or distribution improvements, or related utility infrastructure improvements necessary to serve the proposed use. The letter is for land-use and site-feasibility review only and shall not be construed as County regulation of utility capacity, rates, service territory, interconnection requirements, or system operations.

Section 3. Applicability and Zoning Districts

High-Density Computing Facilities (HDCFs) require substantial electrical infrastructure, may generate continuous operational noise, and may utilize cooling systems that affect surrounding environmental conditions. To ensure compatibility with neighboring land uses, protection of natural resources, and public safety, this section establishes where such facilities may be considered within Jackson County.

A. Prohibited Locations

High-Density Computing Facilities are prohibited in all zoning districts except those specifically listed in Section 3(B).

High-Density Computing Facilities are also prohibited within the Floodplain Overlay District and within any area where industrial or commercial development is prohibited by applicable County, state, or federal law, regulation, easement, deed restriction, conservation restriction, or other legally binding land-use limitation. Sites containing or affecting wetlands, conservation areas, protected natural-resource areas, drainageways, flood-prone areas, karst features, bluffs, or other environmentally sensitive resources shall be subject to all applicable County, state, and federal review and permitting requirements. The County may require the applicant to identify such resources on the site plan and may require additional information or conditions where necessary to determine site suitability and prevent adverse land-use impacts. Sites located within areas mapped in the County's Historical Burial Mound Overlay or other known or potential archaeological or cultural resource areas shall be subject to the County's existing cultural resource review requirements. Where applicable, the County may require a cultural resource assessment prepared by a qualified professional to confirm that development will not disturb protected resources. Sites located within the viewshed of a designated national or state scenic byway shall be reviewed in accordance with the scenic byway and visual resource provisions of Section 12.

B.Allowable Locations (Board of Adjustment Approval Required)

High-Density Computing Facilities may be considered only upon approval by the Board of Adjustment, following a public hearing, within the following zoning districts:

- M-1 Limited Industrial District
- M-2 General Industrial District
- C-1 Commercial District

All High-Density Computing Facilities, regardless of zoning district, shall comply with the enclosure and permanent construction requirements of Section 13.

C.Conditional Use Permit Required

High-Density Computing Facilities shall not be permitted by right in any zoning district.

Approval by the Board of Adjustment is required for all HDCFs and shall be processed as Conditional Use Permits (CUPs) under the Jackson County Zoning Ordinance.

D.General Siting Requirements

1. Sites shall have feasible access to electrical and broadband infrastructure without requiring new service extensions through existing residential neighborhoods or environmentally sensitive areas. As part of siting feasibility, the applicant shall submit the Utility Service Coordination Letter or other acceptable documentation required by Section 9(A), identifying the applicable utility provider and any known utility service extensions, upgrades, easements, substations, transformers, access routes, or related infrastructure improvements that may be necessary to serve the proposed use.
2. Sites shall provide safe, all-weather access for emergency-response, utility, and service vehicles.
3. Facilities that cannot comply with the cooling and water-use standards of Section 7 without reliance on consumptive groundwater or surface-water use shall be ineligible for approval. Any request for consideration of alternative cooling technology shall be reviewed only through the Board of Adjustment approval process and the limited exception provisions of Section 7(B), and shall require written Findings of Fact.

4. Where a proposal involves conversion of existing cropland or pasture to industrial use, the applicant shall provide CSR2 information as required by Section 4. CSR2 is a consideration for compatibility and land-use impacts; it is not, by itself, an approval or denial criterion.

Section 4. Application and Review Process

A. Pre-Application Conference.

Before filing an application, the applicant shall meet with the Zoning Administrator, County Engineer, and Environmental Health. The purpose is to identify site constraints, coordinate utility and infrastructure needs, and confirm required submittals.

B. Application Submittal Requirements.

Applications for a High-Density Computing Facility (HDCF) shall include, at minimum:

1. A site plan showing property boundaries, topography, drainageways, proposed structures, setbacks, utilities, emergency access, stormwater facilities, parking, and landscaping.
2. If the proposal converts existing cropland or pasture, a CSR2 map and brief summary of (a) the average CSR2 for the disturbed area and (b) acres proposed for disturbance. The applicant may include a short narrative on how the layout minimizes conversion where feasible.
3. Required studies, as applicable, including noise analysis, hydrogeologic/water evaluation, utility service coordination, stormwater and drainage information, traffic information, and backup power/fuel storage information, prepared in accordance with Sections 6 through 14 of this ordinance.
4. The Utility Service Coordination Letter or other acceptable documentation required by Section 9(A).
5. A written operations plan describing anticipated hours of operation, staffing levels, maintenance activities, delivery schedules, site security, emergency shutdown procedures, generator use, backup power systems, expected truck traffic during operation, and the name and contact information for the responsible facility operator.
6. If the project is proposed to be constructed in phases, the applicant shall submit a phasing plan identifying the timing, location, electrical load, structures, equipment, impervious surface, utility improvements, and operational capacity of each phase. Any future phase, expansion, or increase in electrical load beyond that approved shall require review as an Expansion or Modification under this ordinance.
7. The applicant shall identify the location and general type of major utility infrastructure proposed to serve the facility, including transformers, substations, switchgear, utility yards, poles, underground routes, easements, service access routes, and related equipment areas, to the extent known at the time of application.
8. The applicant shall identify the proposed method of sanitary sewage disposal and potable water supply for the facility, including whether the facility will use an existing system, proposed private well, public or municipal water service, hauled water, or another lawful source. Any required County Health Department or state agency review shall be coordinated under Section 8.

9. The applicant shall submit a preliminary stormwater, grading, drainage, and erosion-control plan prepared by a qualified professional, identifying existing and proposed drainage patterns, impervious surface, stormwater facilities, erosion-control measures, sediment-control measures, and any required state or federal stormwater permits.

10. The applicant shall provide an estimate of construction and operational traffic, including employee trips, delivery trips, maintenance vehicles, fuel deliveries, waste or e-waste removal, oversized loads, and anticipated haul routes. The County Engineer may require a more detailed traffic impact study where site conditions, road limitations, traffic volume, or public safety concerns warrant additional review.

11. The applicant shall identify any proposed backup generators, fuel tanks, battery energy storage systems, diesel storage, propane storage, coolant storage, or other backup power systems, including general location, capacity, containment measures, noise impacts, air-emissions permitting status if applicable, and emergency-response considerations. Nothing in this subsection authorizes a battery energy storage system except as otherwise allowed by County ordinance.

12. As part of the Emergency Access and Safety Coordination Plan, the applicant shall provide basic site-safety information reasonably necessary for emergency-response coordination, including access routes, gate or access-control information, emergency contact information, general location of electrical disconnects or isolation points, backup generators, fuel storage areas, battery systems if proposed, coolant or chemical storage areas, and any other site features that may affect emergency access or responder awareness. The plan shall [Revised 5/18/2026] be provided to the emergency-response agency having jurisdiction for informational review and coordination purposes only. Nothing in this section shall be interpreted to require the County or any emergency-response agency to approve building design, fire-code compliance, utility-owned equipment, electrical systems, or any matter under the authority of the State Fire Marshal or other agency having jurisdiction.

13. The applicant shall submit a list of known or anticipated local, state, and federal permits, licenses, registrations, approvals, or agency reviews required for the project, including but not limited to stormwater, water use, wastewater or discharge, air emissions, fuel storage, electrical, driveway or access, road-use, or environmental permits. County approval under this ordinance does not relieve the applicant of responsibility to obtain all other required approvals.

14. Public Notification

- a. Notice of the public hearing shall be prepared and published by Jackson County in accordance with Iowa Code sections 335.6 and 331.305 and Chapter 4 of the Jackson County Zoning Ordinance.
- b. In addition to published notice, mailed courtesy notice shall be provided to all property owners within one (1) mile of the subject property lines.
- c. Failure of mailed courtesy notice shall not invalidate the hearing or any action taken, provided published notice was properly given.

15. The required fee and any escrow for third-party review, as determined by the Zoning Administrator.

C. Completeness and Review Timeline.

1. Within fifteen (15) business days of submittal, the Zoning Administrator shall determine whether the application is complete and notify the applicant of any deficiencies or confirm completeness.
2. Upon acceptance as complete, applications eligible for Board of Adjustment review shall be scheduled for a public hearing no sooner than forty-five (45) days from acceptance to allow interdepartmental review, technical evaluation, public notice, and utility coordination.
3. Decision Period.
 - a. No Rezoning Required. If the property is already zoned to allow High-Density Computing Facilities, the Board of Adjustment shall act on the Conditional Use Permit within ninety (90) days after acceptance of a complete application, unless extended by mutual written agreement.
 - b. Rezoning Required. If rezoning is required, the rezoning request shall proceed in accordance with the applicable procedures and timelines of the Jackson County Zoning Ordinance, including any required referrals, reviews, and actions by other jurisdictions or agencies where applicable. Following final action by the Board of Supervisors on the rezoning request, the Board of Adjustment shall schedule and consider the Conditional Use Permit application in accordance with this section.
4. The ninety-day decision period is paused while (a) third-party review is underway or (b) required documents from the applicant or Utility Provider are outstanding.

D. Third-Party Technical Review.

1. The County may retain one or more qualified independent professionals to review technical materials where specialized expertise beyond normal staff capacity is reasonably necessary.

All costs of third-party review, including professional fees and reasonable County administrative costs associated with such review, shall be paid by the applicant to Jackson County, reimbursed to Jackson County upon invoice, or paid through an escrow or advance-payment process established by Jackson County. Such costs shall not be borne by Jackson County. *[Revised from 5/18/2026 draft]*

2. The County may require an escrow deposit or advance payment in an amount reasonably estimated to cover third-party review costs. Review or processing of the application may be suspended if the escrow is depleted and not timely replenished by the applicant.
3. The County may require an escrow deposit or advance payment to Jackson County in an amount reasonably estimated to cover third-party review costs. Review or processing of the application may be suspended if the escrow is depleted and not timely replenished by the applicant. *[Revised from 5/18/2026 draft]*

E. Public Hearing.

All High-Density Computing Facility Conditional Use Permit applications shall be heard by the Board of Adjustment following completion of any required rezoning process.

F. Permit Conditions and Findings.

1. The Board of Adjustment shall impose such reasonable and necessary conditions as are needed to ensure compliance with this ordinance and to protect the public health, safety, and welfare.
2. All decisions shall include written Findings of Fact summarizing the evidence, conditions, and basis for approval or denial, with reference to the standards of Iowa Code section 335.15 where applicable.
3. In addition to the technical standards set forth in Sections 5 through 15, the Findings of Fact shall address, as applicable, compatibility with surrounding land uses, transportation and road impacts, utility service considerations, CSR2 information, and consistency with the Jackson County Land Use Policy and Comprehensive Plan.

G. Minimum Standards; No Guarantee of Approval.

Compliance with the minimum submittal, technical, dimensional, and operational standards of this ordinance does not, by itself, guarantee approval of a High-Density Computing Facility. Each application shall remain subject to the applicable public hearing process, required Findings of Fact, site-specific review, consistency with the Jackson County Zoning Ordinance, Jackson County Land Use Policy and Comprehensive Plan, and consideration of public health, safety, welfare, infrastructure, compatibility, and natural resource impacts. The reviewing body may approve, approve with conditions, or deny an application based on the standards of this ordinance and the evidence in the record.

H. As-Built Documentation and Pre-Operation Certification.

Prior to commencement of full facility operations, the facility owner and operator shall submit as-built plans or certification from a licensed professional confirming that the facility was constructed in substantial compliance with the approved site plan, approved conditions, utility infrastructure plan, stormwater plan, emergency access plan, and other approved application materials.

I. Annual Compliance Certification.

By March 1 of each year, the facility owner and operator shall submit a brief annual certification confirming that the facility remains in compliance with the approved Conditional Use Permit, approved site plan, approved operations plan, noise and vibration standards, cooling and water-use standards, emergency contact information, decommissioning financial assurance, and all applicable conditions of approval. The certification shall identify any material changes in ownership, operation, electrical load, cooling technology, backup power systems, or site layout during the prior calendar year.

Section 5. Setbacks and Separation Requirements

The following setbacks and separation requirements shall apply to all principal structures, equipment enclosures, cooling systems, generators, and associated infrastructure of a High-Density Computing Facility.

A. Occupied Structures and Cemeteries.

No High-Density Computing Facility shall be located less than one thousand feet (1,000') from any occupied structure or cemetery.

B. Property Lines.

No High-Density Computing Facility shall be located less than five hundred feet (500') from any property line.

C. Wells.

No High-Density Computing Facility structure, equipment enclosure, cooling system, generator, or associated infrastructure shall be located less than five hundred feet (500') from any existing public well or any private well located on a nonparticipating parcel, unless a different separation distance is approved or required by the County Health Department, IDNR, or other agency having jurisdiction. *[Revised from 5/18/2026 draft]*

D. Known Mapped Sensitive Areas.

No High-Density Computing Facility shall be located less than one thousand feet (1,000') from any known mapped sensitive area.

E. Sensitive Area Protection.

Any High-Density Computing Facility that is otherwise permitted under this ordinance and is proposed more than one thousand feet (1,000') but within one thousand three hundred twenty feet (1,320') of a known mapped sensitive area may, as a condition of approval, be required to implement additional site protections reasonably necessary to prevent runoff, erosion, sedimentation, thermal impacts, or other adverse effects on the sensitive area. Such protections may include buffer strips, stormwater measures, grading controls, vegetation requirements, or other comparable measures appropriate to the site.

F. Greater Setback May Be Required.

The Board of Adjustment may require greater setbacks where site conditions, topography, facility design, cooling technology, water-use characteristics, or other site-specific factors indicate that additional distance is necessary to protect public health, safety, and welfare, to achieve compliance with Section 6 of this ordinance, or to prevent adverse impacts to groundwater, surface water, or hydrologically sensitive features.

G. Findings of Fact Required.

Any increase in the setbacks required by this section, or any additional site protection required under this section, shall be supported by written Findings of Fact referencing applicable studies, modeling, site conditions, agency guidance, or other information contained in the public record.

H. Greater Standard Governs.

Where multiple setback or separation standards apply, the greater distance shall govern. Nothing in this section shall be interpreted to authorize a reduction of any required setback except through the applicable variance process under the Jackson County Zoning Ordinance.

I. Measurement.

Setbacks shall be measured from the nearest High-Density Computing Facility structure, equipment enclosure, cooling system, generator, or associated infrastructure to the respective property line, occupied structure, cemetery, or environmental feature.

If more restrictive setback, buffer, or water-quality requirements are imposed by state or federal law, those requirements shall govern.

Section 6. Noise and Vibration Standards

The purpose of this section is to protect the health, comfort, and welfare of Jackson County residents from excessive noise and vibration associated with High-Density Computing Facilities.

A. Noise Limits

1. Noise from any High-Density Computing Facility shall not exceed fifty decibels (50 dBA), measured at the property line of a nonparticipating parcel.
2. If testing identifies a distinct hum, tone, or other prominent low-frequency characteristic, the measured sound level shall be adjusted by plus five decibels (+5 dBA) for compliance evaluation purposes.

B. Noise Measurement Standards.

1. Noise measurements shall be conducted in accordance with the most current versions of ANSI S12.9 (Parts 1 and 3) and IEC 61672-1, or approved successor or equivalent standards providing equal or greater rigor, accuracy, and public protection.
Instrumentation and Method. Testing shall be performed using a Class 1 / Type 1 sound level meter capable of one-third-octave band analysis, or equivalent instrumentation under an approved successor or equivalent standard.
2. Measurements shall be taken over a representative operating period sufficient to capture typical facility conditions, including cyclical equipment operation, as determined by the qualified professional conducting the test.
3. If a successor or equivalent standard is used, the testing professional shall provide a brief written statement explaining why the alternative standard is equivalent to or more conservative than the standards listed above.

C. Noise Testing, Reporting, and Corrective Action.

1. The facility owner and operator shall, at their sole expense, provide:
 - a. a baseline ambient noise study completed prior to commencement of construction, documenting existing background sound conditions at representative locations; and
 - b. a post-startup noise compliance test completed within sixty (60) days after commencement of full facility operations, or within such additional time approved by the Zoning Administrator for good cause, demonstrating compliance with this ordinance under representative operating conditions.
2. Additional noise testing may be required by Jackson County in response to a complaint, following any Expansion or Modification, following a documented violation, or when the Zoning Administrator reasonably determines that additional testing is necessary to investigate potential noncompliance.
3. Beginning on the third anniversary of commencement of full facility operations, and every three (3) years thereafter for so long as the facility operates, the facility owner and operator shall provide an updated noise compliance test at their sole expense.
4. All noise testing shall be conducted by an independent qualified professional experienced in environmental noise measurement.

5. All noise testing and reporting required under this section shall be at the sole expense of the facility owner and operator and shall not be borne by Jackson County.

6. Any noise study or sound test required under this ordinance shall be submitted to the Zoning Administrator within ten (10) business days after testing. The report shall include, at a minimum, testing locations, dates and times, equipment and calibration information, standards used, facility operating conditions, and results sufficient to demonstrate compliance.

7. If noise exceeds the allowable limits, the facility owner and operator shall promptly implement corrective measures and, if necessary, suspend the offending equipment or operations until compliance is demonstrated by follow-up testing. Any follow-up report shall also be submitted to the Zoning Administrator.

D. Vibration Limits.

Maximum Vibration Level. Ground vibration from any High-Density Computing Facility shall not exceed the following Peak Particle Velocity (PPV), measured at any property line:

0.30 mm/s PPV during daytime hours (7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.);

0.14 mm/s PPV during nighttime hours (10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.).

E. Vibration Measurement Standards

1. Vibration measurements shall be conducted in accordance with the most current versions of DIN 4150-3 and BS 7385-2, or approved successor or equivalent standards providing equal or greater rigor, accuracy, and public protection.

Instrumentation and Method. Testing shall be performed using a tri-axial vibration monitor or accelerometer capable of recording Peak Particle Velocity in three directions.

2. Measurements shall be taken over a representative operating period sufficient to capture typical facility conditions, including cyclical equipment operation, as determined by the qualified professional conducting the test.

3. If a successor or equivalent standard is used, the testing professional shall provide a brief written statement explaining why the alternative standard is equivalent to or more conservative than the standards listed above.

F. Vibration Testing, Reporting, and Corrective Action.

1. The facility owner and operator shall, at their sole expense, provide:

- a. a baseline ambient vibration study completed prior to commencement of construction, documenting existing background vibration conditions at representative locations; and
- b. a post-startup vibration compliance test completed within sixty (60) days after commencement of full facility operations, or within such additional time approved by the Zoning Administrator for good cause, demonstrating compliance with this ordinance under representative operating conditions.

2. Additional vibration testing may be required by Jackson County in response to a complaint, following any Expansion or Modification, following a documented violation, or when the Zoning Administrator reasonably determines that additional testing is necessary to investigate potential noncompliance.

3. Beginning on the third anniversary of commencement of full facility operations, and every three (3) years thereafter for so long as the facility operates, the facility owner and operator shall provide an updated vibration compliance test at their sole expense.
4. All vibration testing shall be conducted by an independent qualified professional experienced in environmental or structural vibration measurement.
5. All vibration testing and reporting required under this section shall be at the sole expense of the facility owner and operator and shall not be borne by Jackson County.
6. Any vibration study or test required under this ordinance shall be submitted to the Zoning Administrator within ten (10) business days after testing. The report shall include, at a minimum, test locations and measurement points, dates and times, measurement duration, equipment and calibration information, standards used, facility operating conditions during testing, and results sufficient to demonstrate compliance.
7. If vibration exceeds the allowable limits, the facility owner and operator shall promptly implement corrective measures and, if necessary, suspend the offending equipment or operations until compliance is demonstrated by follow-up testing. Any follow-up report shall also be submitted to the Zoning Administrator.

Section 7. Cooling Systems & Water Use

The purpose of this section is to address land use impacts associated with cooling systems and water use, including compatibility with surrounding properties, protection of groundwater and surface water resources, and site suitability for High-Density Computing Facilities. This section is intended to establish land use standards and coordination requirements only. Nothing in this section shall be construed to supersede, duplicate, or replace the authority of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources or any other agency having jurisdiction over water withdrawal, discharge, wastewater, or related permitting requirements.

A. Required Cooling Technology

All High-Density Computing Facilities (HDCFs) shall utilize air-cooled or closed-loop cooling systems. Open-loop, once-through, or water-consumptive cooling systems are prohibited. This requirement applies to all primary and auxiliary cooling equipment serving computing, electrical, or energy storage components of the facility.

B. Limited Exception (Board of Adjustment Discretion)

The Board of Adjustment may consider an alternative cooling technology only if the applicant submits a certified engineering report demonstrating that the proposed system:

1. Does not withdraw groundwater or surface water.
2. Results in no net consumptive water loss.
3. Does not increase risk to aquifers, private wells, or hydrologically sensitive features.
4. Complies with all applicable Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) water-use and discharge requirements.

Any approval of an alternative cooling system shall require written Findings of Fact and may include conditions of approval.

C. Spill Prevention and Containment

All coolants, lubricants, and water-treatment chemicals shall be stored in approved containers with secondary containment sufficient to prevent release to soil, groundwater, or surface water. Containment practices shall comply with all applicable local, state, and federal requirements, including applicable IDNR or EPA requirements, manufacturer specifications, permit conditions, and applicable fire, electrical, or industry standards. *[Revised from 5/18/2026 draft]*

D. Cooling Water Discharge and Disposal

Any discharge or disposal of cooling water, including water containing additives or treatment chemicals, shall comply with all applicable IDNR, federal, and other legal requirements. Where cooling-water discharge or disposal is proposed as part of facility operations, the applicant may be required to provide sufficient information to demonstrate that such discharge or disposal will be lawfully handled through the appropriate permitting or disposal pathway. Nothing in this subsection shall be interpreted to authorize discharge otherwise regulated by IDNR or other agencies having jurisdiction.

E. Closed-Loop System Verification at Start-Up (Under Review)

Prior to commencement of full facility operations, the facility owner and operator shall provide written verification from a licensed professional engineer or qualified cooling-system installer that:

1. All closed-loop cooling systems have been pressure-tested or otherwise inspected for leaks and system integrity;
2. Testing and inspection were conducted in accordance with manufacturer specifications and applicable industry standards; and
3. Any deficiencies identified during testing have been corrected and re-verified.

The Zoning Administrator may require follow-up verification or inspection if there is credible evidence of leakage, system malfunction, or resulting impacts to neighboring land uses or environmental resources.

F. Annual Water Use Reporting

Unless the facility is connected to a municipal water-supply system, the facility owner and operator shall submit a simple annual water-use summary to the Zoning Administrator by March 1 of each year covering the prior calendar year of operations. The summary shall include, at a minimum:

1. Total water used during the reporting period, by source, including municipal supply, private well, or hauled water;
2. A brief description of any changes to cooling equipment, cooling-system type, or water-use practices during the reporting period; and
3. A certification that the facility remains in compliance with the cooling-system and water-use requirements of this section.

Routine submission of this summary to state agencies is not required by this ordinance. Additional reporting may be requested by the Zoning Administrator only if required by IDNR or if credible evidence of water-use conflicts with neighboring properties or environmental resources arises.

G. Compliance With Other Laws

Nothing in this section supersedes, duplicates, or limits the authority of the Iowa Department of Natural

Resources or any other agency having jurisdiction. All facilities shall comply with Iowa Code chapter 455B and all other applicable state and federal laws, permits, and regulatory requirements.

Section 8. Sanitary Facilities and Water Supply

This section serves as a coordination provision. Sanitary sewage disposal systems and potable water supply systems are governed by the County Health Department and applicable state agencies rather than independent County zoning standards.

All sanitary sewage disposal systems and potable water supplies serving a High-Density Computing Facility shall comply with applicable County Health Department regulations and all applicable state requirements administered by the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, or any other agency having jurisdiction.

Where review or permitting by the County Health Department or a state agency is required, the Zoning Administrator shall coordinate referral as part of the application review process. Approval under this ordinance does not relieve the facility owner, operator, applicant, or property owner of responsibility to obtain all required sanitary, wastewater, potable-water, well, water-system, or related permits and approvals.

Section 9. Utility Coordination

A. Utility Service Coordination and Applicant Verification.

The applicant shall provide written documentation identifying the applicable electric Utility Provider for the subject property and confirming that the applicant has consulted with the Utility Provider regarding the proposed High-Density Computing Facility, including the proposed maximum electrical service load and any known utility service extensions, upgrades, easements, substations, transmission/distribution improvements, or related site improvements that may be necessary to serve the proposed use.

The documentation may be provided in the form of a utility service availability letter, utility feasibility letter, service coordination letter, or other written confirmation acceptable to the Zoning Administrator. Proprietary, confidential, rate-related, or contract terms may be redacted.

The purpose of this requirement is limited to land-use review, site-feasibility review, infrastructure coordination, emergency access and safety planning, and evaluation of potential site impacts. Nothing in this subsection shall be interpreted to require the County to determine electric utility capacity, approve or deny electric service, regulate utility rates, regulate service territories, regulate interconnection requirements, require a Utility Provider to serve the facility, or interfere with matters governed by state or federal law. Failure to provide the required documentation may result in the application being deemed incomplete.

B. Utility Connections, Infrastructure and Site Design

1. Reasonable efforts shall be made to place utility connections serving the HDCF underground where feasible based on soil conditions, topography, distance, and other site constraints.

2. Major utility equipment areas, transformers, switchgear, substations, easements, and service-access routes shall be shown on the approved site plan to the extent known and shall be located, screened, and accessed in a manner compatible with surrounding land uses and emergency-response needs.

Section 10. Emergency Access, Safety Coordination and Hazard Containment

A. Emergency Access and Safety Coordination Plan

Prior to issuance of any zoning permit, the applicant shall submit an Emergency Access and Safety Coordination Plan consistent with the information required under Section 4(B)(12). The plan shall demonstrate that the facility site layout provides safe, reliable, all-weather access for emergency-response, utility, and service vehicles and includes basic site-safety information reasonably necessary for emergency-response coordination.

The plan may be provided to the emergency-response agency having jurisdiction for informational review and coordination purposes only. Nothing in this section shall be interpreted to require the County or any emergency-response agency to approve building design, fire-code compliance, utility-owned equipment, electrical systems, or any matter under the authority of the State Fire Marshal, Utility Provider, or other agency having jurisdiction.

The plan shall be maintained on file with the County and updated as necessary to reflect material changes to site layout, access, gate or access-control information, emergency contact information, emergency electrical disconnects or isolation points, backup power systems, fuel storage areas, coolant or chemical storage areas, or other site features that may affect emergency access or responder awareness.

B. Emergency Contact and Access Updates

The facility owner and operator shall maintain current twenty-four-hour emergency contact information with the Zoning Administrator. Any change in facility ownership, operation, emergency contact information, access-control information, or designated responsible representative shall be provided to the Zoning Administrator within ten (10) days.

C. Hazard Awareness and Containment

To reduce risks to surrounding land uses, public infrastructure, responders, and natural resources, on-site storage of coolants, fuels, lubricants, batteries, or other regulated liquids or chemicals shall be located and maintained so as to prevent spills, leaks, discharges, or uncontrolled releases to soil, groundwater, surface water, stormwater systems, or the atmosphere, as applicable under local, state, or federal law.

Secondary containment and release-prevention measures shall be provided where required by applicable law, permit, code, manufacturer specifications, or industry standards. *[Revised from 5/18/2026 draft]*

D. Emergency Signage

A sign visible at the primary access entrance shall identify the facility owner and/or operator and display a twenty-four-hour emergency contact phone number. Required signage shall be maintained in good condition for the life of the facility. Any change in facility ownership, operation, or emergency contact information shall be updated on the required signage and in the Emergency Access and Safety Coordination Plan within ten (10) days.

Section 11. Waste Management, E-Waste, and Regulated Materials

A. Purpose and Land Use Basis

This section is intended to address land-use impacts associated with the on-site accumulation, storage, removal, recycling, and disposal of electronic waste, obsolete equipment, regulated materials, and similar

materials associated with High-Density Computing Facilities. Such impacts may include site-safety concerns, contamination risk, visual blight, interference with site maintenance, and interference with decommissioning or site restoration. Nothing in this section is intended to supersede, duplicate, or replace the authority of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the State Fire Marshal, or any other agency having jurisdiction over environmental, waste-disposal, hazardous-material, or code-compliance matters.

B. Waste Handling and Disposal

All solid waste, e-waste, hazardous materials, and regulated substances associated with a High-Density Computing Facility shall be handled, stored, transported, and disposed of in compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal laws. Such materials shall not be accumulated on-site beyond reasonable operational needs.

C. Timely Removal

To prevent site-safety concerns, visual blight, and interference with decommissioning or site restoration, e-waste and hazardous materials shall be stored and removed in compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal laws and shall not be accumulated on-site beyond reasonable operational needs. Temporary storage pending removal shall occur within approved structures or enclosures, or within approved containers designed for the material being stored, and shall use appropriate containment measures where required by applicable law or standards.

D. Documentation

The facility owner and operator shall maintain disposal, recycling, transfer, manifest, or other records required by applicable local, state, or federal law, including IDNR or EPA requirements where applicable. To the extent such records exist or are legally required, they shall be retained for at least five (5) years or the period required by the applicable agency, whichever is longer, and shall be provided to the Zoning Administrator upon request for purposes of verifying compliance with this ordinance or decommissioning obligations. Routine submission is not required unless a compliance concern arises.

E. Compliance and Referral

Failure to comply with this section constitutes a zoning violation subject to enforcement under the Jackson County Zoning Ordinance. Jackson County may refer suspected environmental violations to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, or other agencies having jurisdiction.

Section 12. Screening, Fencing, and Lighting

A. Security Fencing

An eight-foot (8 ft.) security fence shall be installed and maintained around the perimeter of the High-Density Computing Facility. Fencing shall be constructed of durable, non-reflective materials commonly used for substations, utility facilities, or similar secured infrastructure. All access points shall be secured with lockable gates designed to prevent unauthorized entry. Fencing shall be maintained in good condition for the life of the facility.

B. Visual Screening

Visual screening may be required by the Board of Adjustment where necessary to reduce visual impacts on nearby occupied structures or public roadways and to maintain compatibility with surrounding land uses. In determining whether screening is required, the Board of Adjustment may consider facility visibility, site conditions, topography, existing vegetation, and the relationship of the facility to nearby occupied structures and public roads.

1. Required screening may include architectural walls or panels, berming, landscaping with native or adaptive species, existing vegetation, or other comparable methods approved by the Board of Adjustment.
2. Loading bays, refuse and trash collection areas, service entrances, and similar service areas shall be located or screened to minimize visibility from public roads and nearby occupied structures.
3. Ground-mounted mechanical and electrical equipment, including but not limited to generators, transformers, cooling equipment, switchgear, and similar components, shall also be located or screened to minimize visibility from public roads and nearby occupied structures. Ground-mounted mechanical or electrical equipment and service-yard areas shall not be located within any required building setback for the zoning district.
4. Screening requirements shall be site-specific and shall not interfere with sight-distance requirements, road safety, snow removal, or utility infrastructure.

C. Screening Maintenance

Any required screening shall be maintained for the life of the facility. Dead, damaged, or missing plant materials shall be replaced within the next appropriate growing season.

D. Exterior Lighting

All exterior lighting shall be designed to minimize glare, light trespass, and visual impacts on surrounding properties. Exterior lighting shall be fully shielded and downcast and shall be directed away from adjacent properties and public roadways. Lighting levels shall not exceed 0.2 foot-candles, measured at the property line. Motion sensors, timers, or other control technologies shall be used where feasible to minimize continuous illumination. Exterior lighting fixtures shall not exceed 3,000 Kelvin.

E. Reflective Materials

Reflective, mirrored, or high-gloss exterior finishes are prohibited on buildings, fencing, and equipment enclosures. Exterior materials shall utilize matte or low-reflectivity finishes compatible with surrounding rural or industrial character.

F. Scenic Byway and Visual Resource Considerations.

Jackson County recognizes the importance of protecting the visual character and scenic resources associated with designated state and national scenic byways. Where a proposed High-Density Computing Facility is located within the viewshed of such a corridor, the Board of Adjustment may consider visual impacts and may require reasonable conditions, including additional screening, lighting controls, site-layout modifications, and compatible exterior materials or finishes, to reduce adverse visual effects.

G. Site Maintenance

The facility owner and operator shall maintain the site in a clean and orderly condition for the life of the facility, including fencing, screening elements, lighting fixtures, and the grounds immediately surrounding structures.

H. Enforcement

Failure to maintain the site in compliance with this section or with approved plans shall constitute a zoning violation subject to enforcement under this ordinance. All costs associated with installation, maintenance, replacement, and long-term upkeep required under this section shall be the responsibility of the facility owner and operator.

Section 13. Structural Standards

A. Permanent Construction Required

All principal buildings and equipment enclosures associated with a High-Density Computing Facility shall be permanently constructed and supported by a concrete foundation or equivalent engineered foundation designed by a licensed professional engineer.

B. Enclosure Required for Computing Equipment

All servers, computer clusters, processors, data-processing equipment, cryptocurrency mining equipment, artificial-intelligence computing equipment, and similar computing equipment shall be located entirely within a fully enclosed, permanent building. Outdoor or partially enclosed placement of computing equipment is prohibited.

This subsection does not prohibit exterior placement of permanently installed mechanical, electrical, cooling, generator, transformer, switchgear, fuel-storage, utility, or similar support equipment, provided such equipment is shown on the approved site plan and complies with all applicable setbacks, screening, noise, safety, containment, and other requirements of this ordinance.

C. Exterior Mechanical and Electrical Support Equipment

Exterior mechanical, electrical, cooling, generator, transformer, switchgear, fuel-storage, utility, or similar support equipment shall be permanently installed, shown on the approved site plan, and maintained in good repair. Such equipment shall not be placed on temporary skids, trailers, shipping containers, mobile storage units, or other non-permanent supports except during construction, repair, emergency replacement, or other temporary activity approved by the Zoning Administrator.

D. Prohibited Structures

The following portable or non-permanent structures shall not be used as buildings, enclosures, or permanent support structures for computing equipment or associated support equipment of a High-Density Computing Facility:

- Cargo or shipping containers;
- Railroad cars;
- Semi-truck trailers;

- Mobile or temporary storage units; or
- Any other portable or non-permanent structure not designed for long-term building occupancy.

E. Structural Maintenance

All structures and equipment enclosures associated with a High-Density Computing Facility shall be maintained in good repair and free of deterioration, corrosion, or structural defects that could create safety hazards, fire risk, or operational impacts. Failure to maintain structures in compliance with this section constitutes a zoning violation subject to enforcement under this ordinance.

F. Parking

Off-street parking for High-Density Computing Facilities shall be provided at a minimum ratio of one (1) parking space per two (2) employees on the maximum shift, plus one (1) parking space per company vehicle. If the principal use of the facility changes following CUP approval, the new use shall comply with all applicable parking and loading requirements for that use under the Jackson County Zoning Ordinance.

Section 14. Road Use and Infrastructure Agreements

A. Purpose

To protect Jackson County roads, bridges, culverts, and drainage systems from damage due to construction, operation, or maintenance traffic associated with High-Density Computing Facilities (HDCFs); to ensure safe and reliable access during construction; and to assign responsibility for repair and restoration to the facility operator.

B. Road Identification and Access

1. Before issuance of any zoning permit and prior to construction-related hauling or site mobilization, the applicant shall identify all public roads, bridges, and access points intended for use in transporting equipment, materials, or supplies to and from the site.
2. The County Engineer may require additional traffic information or a traffic impact study when the proposed facility, construction schedule, haul route, access point, road classification, bridge or culvert condition, sight-distance limitation, or nearby land use indicates that additional review is reasonably necessary to protect public safety and public infrastructure.
3. The applicant shall obtain all required oversize-load, weight, and access permits from the County Engineer or other road authority at least sixty (60) days prior to mobilization.

C. Existing Road Conditions (Pre-Construction Survey)

1. Prior to commencement of construction-related hauling or site mobilization, the applicant shall conduct a pre-construction road condition survey in coordination with the County Engineer to establish baseline conditions for all proposed haul routes.
2. The survey shall include, at a minimum, photographs or video, pavement and shoulder condition documentation, and identification/condition of ditches, culverts, and drainage structures.

3. The survey shall be prepared or verified by a licensed professional engineer and shall be approved by the County Engineer before construction begins.

D. Road Use Agreement

1. Prior to the start of construction, the facility owner and operator shall enter into a written Road Use Agreement with Jackson County, in a form approved by the County Engineer and County Attorney, if applicable.

2. The RUA shall describe designated haul routes, traffic control measures, seasonal load restrictions, dust-control measures, and the operator's responsibilities for maintenance and repair.

3. The RUA shall remain in effect until all construction activities are complete and final inspections are accepted by the County Engineer.

E. Financial Assurance

1. Prior to the start of construction-related hauling, the operator shall provide financial security—such as a performance bond, irrevocable letter of credit, or cash escrow, in an amount equal to one hundred thirty percent (130%) of the estimated cost of any required road repairs, improvements, or maintenance.

2. The amount shall be determined by the County Engineer based on expected use and anticipated repair or improvement costs and may be adjusted as needed to reflect updated engineering estimates or changed site conditions.

3. Financial assurance shall be in a form acceptable to the County and shall be issued by a surety or financial institution authorized to do business in the State of Iowa.

4. Financial assurance shall remain in force until written release by the County Engineer, not less than twelve (12) months after completion of construction or hauling activities.

F. Maintenance and Repair

1. During construction and any other period of extraordinary hauling or heavy equipment transport associated with the facility, the facility owner and operator shall maintain all approved haul routes in a condition equal to or better than their documented pre-construction condition.

2. Any damage, deterioration, or safety hazard caused by facility-related traffic shall be repaired or mitigated within seventy-two (72) hours of discovery or written notice from the County Engineer, or within such other reasonable timeframe as may be specified by the County Engineer based on the nature of the damage and public safety considerations.

3. If repairs are not made within the required timeframe, the County may take enforcement action and may draw upon the financial assurance to complete the work.

G. Post-Construction Inspection and Release

1. After construction is complete, a joint inspection shall be performed by the County Engineer and operator to compare post-construction conditions with the baseline survey.
2. When all deficiencies have been corrected, the County Engineer shall issue written confirmation and release the financial security.
3. If deficiencies remain, the County may use the bond, escrow, or other instrument to complete remaining work and recover administrative/engineering costs where authorized.

H. Drainage and Infrastructure Protection

The operator shall repair any damage to public drainage systems, culverts, or associated infrastructure caused by construction or operation within seventy-two (72) hours of discovery or as directed by the County Engineer.

Section 15. Discontinuation, Decommissioning, and Abandonment

A. Purpose

To ensure High-Density Computing Facilities (HDCFs) are dismantled, removed, and the site restored to a safe, stable, and environmentally sound condition when use is discontinued, abandoned, or a permit is revoked, and to ensure that decommissioning costs are borne by the operator and property owner rather than the public.

B. Discontinuation / Abandonment

1. A HDCF is considered discontinued after one (1) year without active operations or other documented productive use authorized by the Conditional Use Permit, unless the operator submits a written plan to return the facility to service on a reasonable schedule. The operator shall provide written notice to the Zoning Administrator when the facility is permanently shut down or when operations will be suspended for an extended period.
2. The Zoning Administrator may determine discontinuation or abandonment based on inspection, operator information, or other reliable documentation.

C. Decommissioning Deadline and Extension

1. Following discontinuation or abandonment, the facility owner and operator shall complete decommissioning and site restoration within two hundred seventy (270) days in accordance with the approved Decommissioning Plan.
2. The facility owner and operator may request one extension of up to ninety (90) days, in writing, for good cause shown.

D. Decommissioning Plan (Submitted with CUP)

1. At the time of Conditional Use Permit (CUP) application, the applicant shall submit a Decommissioning Plan outlining how the facility will be removed and the site restored at the end of its service life or upon discontinuation/abandonment.
2. The plan shall be prepared and sealed by a professional engineer licensed in the State of Iowa.

3. At a minimum, the plan shall include:

- a. A step-by-step sequence for dismantling, removal, recycling, and disposal of buildings, equipment, foundations, wiring, conduits, fencing, lighting, impervious surfaces, and accessory facilities.
- b. Site-restoration actions, including repair of disturbed areas, regrading as needed, and revegetation/ground cover.
- c. An itemized cost estimate in current dollars for decommissioning and site restoration, excluding salvage value.
- d. Identification of responsible parties and contractors.
- e. A description of how decommissioning will be carried out safely and in compliance with applicable laws.

E. Cost Estimate Review and Update

1. The decommissioning cost estimate is subject to County review for completeness and reasonableness. At the applicant's sole expense, the County may retain an independent qualified professional to evaluate the estimate.
2. At the sole expense of the facility owner and operator, jointly and severally, decommissioning cost estimates shall be reviewed and updated at least every three (3) years, or more often if required by the County due to material changes in facility size or configuration.

F. Financial Assurance Required

1. Prior to issuance of any zoning permit or commencement of construction, the facility owner and operator shall be jointly and severally responsible for providing and maintaining financial assurance in a form acceptable to Jackson County to guarantee decommissioning, site restoration, and compliance with this section. The amount of financial assurance shall be based on the approved decommissioning cost estimate, as reviewed and accepted by the County, and shall be kept current and in effect for the life of the facility until released in writing by Jackson County following satisfactory completion of decommissioning and restoration.
2. Financial assurance shall be issued by a surety or financial institution authorized to do business in Iowa and shall name Jackson County as beneficiary/obligee as appropriate.
3. Financial assurance shall remain in effect until the County confirms in writing that decommissioning and site restoration are complete. Failure to maintain required financial assurance is a zoning violation and a breach of CUP conditions.

G. Responsibility; Property Owner Acknowledgement

Prior to final CUP approval and prior to issuance of any zoning permit or commencement of construction, the property owner of record shall either be a co-applicant or, together with the facility operator, shall execute and provide to Jackson County a written acknowledgment, in a form approved by the County, confirming their understanding of and agreement to comply with the decommissioning, restoration, financial assurance, maintenance, and enforcement requirements of this ordinance.

The acknowledgment shall include, at a minimum:

1. The legal description of the subject property and parcel identification number;

2. The name and address of the record property owner;
3. The name and address of the facility operator, if different from the owner;
4. Reference to the approved Conditional Use Permit by case number and date of approval, if applicable;
5. A statement that the facility owner and operator are jointly and severally responsible for compliance with the requirements of this ordinance, including decommissioning, restoration, financial assurance, and cost reimbursement obligations;
6. A statement that such obligations shall be binding upon the owner, operator, and their respective heirs, successors, assigns, lessees, transferees, and any other party acquiring an ownership or operational interest in the facility or subject property;
7. A statement that any subsequent transfer, sale, assignment, or conveyance of the subject property or facility shall not extinguish or diminish the obligations imposed by this ordinance; and
8. A statement that zoning approval does not relieve the owner or operator from compliance with any other applicable local, state, or federal requirements.

The County may require that this acknowledgment, or a memorandum of it in recordable form, be recorded against the subject property with the Jackson County Recorder so as to provide notice to successors and assigns. A recorded copy, including Recorder filing information, shall be provided to the Zoning Administrator before any zoning or building permit is issued. Failure to record and provide proof of recording as required by this section constitutes a zoning violation and shall be grounds for withholding or revoking permits issued under this ordinance.

Private lease terms or contractual arrangements between the owner and operator do not limit the County's authority to enforce this ordinance.

H. County Remedy on Default; Cost Recovery

1. If the operator fails to complete decommissioning and restoration on time, the County may issue a written Notice of Default stating the basis for noncompliance and providing a reasonable cure period, not to exceed thirty (30) days, unless a shorter period is needed to address an imminent threat to health, safety, or the environment.

2. After the cure period (or sooner, if necessary to address an imminent threat), the County may take enforcement action and may cause decommissioning and site restoration to be completed by contractors selected by the County.

3. The County may draw on the financial assurance in an amount sufficient to pay all reasonable costs incurred to complete decommissioning and restoration, including contractor costs, administrative costs, engineering and inspection services, and legal expenses. The County's determination of default and documentation of costs shall be sufficient basis for a claim against the financial assurance.

4. If County costs exceed the available financial assurance, the operator and property owner of record may be held responsible for the unpaid balance to the extent permitted by law.

5. Where authorized by Iowa law, the County may pursue recovery of eligible costs through liens, special assessments, or tax-recovery procedures, including Iowa Code § 331.384 if determined applicable by legal counsel.

I. Documentation of Completion

Upon completion of decommissioning and site restoration, the facility owner and operator shall submit a final report prepared by a qualified professional certifying that work was completed in accordance with the approved plan. The County shall inspect the site before releasing financial assurance.

J. Site Restoration

Unless otherwise approved as part of a reuse plan, decommissioning shall include:

1. Removal of exterior HDCF-specific equipment and appurtenances, including exterior equipment yards, standalone cooling equipment, generators, transformers not needed for a subsequent permitted use, above-ground tanks, and security fencing that is no longer needed.
2. Restoration of disturbed areas not needed for a subsequent permitted use, including removal of unused gravel laydown areas, stabilization of soil, and reseeding or other vegetative cover consistent with surrounding land uses.
3. Removal or mitigation of foundations, pads, or below-grade structures that create safety hazards, impede agricultural use, or are inconsistent with the approved post-decommissioning land use.

K. Interior Equipment and Materials

Interior computing equipment and associated materials shall be de-energized and managed in compliance with all applicable e-waste, solid-waste, and hazardous-waste laws and regulations, including Iowa Code Chapter 455B and any applicable state or federal requirements.

Nothing in this ordinance shall be construed to prohibit reuse of a structurally sound, code-compliant building shell and foundation for other permitted industrial, commercial, or agricultural uses, provided all hazardous materials and regulated equipment are removed or managed in compliance with applicable law and any approved reuse plan.

L. Reuse of Buildings

The Board of Adjustment may approve a decommissioning plan that retains a building shell and associated foundations when a subsequent permitted use has been identified or is reasonably foreseeable, and when retention is consistent with public safety, building and fire codes, and surrounding land use compatibility.

Section 16. Enforcement and Penalties

A. General Authority

The Zoning Administrator is authorized to administer and enforce this ordinance pursuant to Chapter 11 of the Jackson County Zoning Ordinance and Iowa Code § 335.

B. Responsibility

The facility owner and operator shall be jointly and severally responsible for compliance with this ordinance, all conditions of approval, all approved plans and submissions, and all obligations relating to construction, operation, maintenance, decommissioning, restoration, and enforcement of the facility.

No transfer of ownership, operational control, leasehold interest, or other interest in the facility or subject property shall relieve the owner or operator of any responsibility under this ordinance unless and until such transfer is approved in writing by Jackson County as required by this ordinance.

Private agreements between the owner, operator, lessee, contractor, or any other party shall not limit or impair the County's authority to enforce this ordinance against any responsible party.

C. Violations and Procedures

1. When the Zoning Administrator determines that a violation of this ordinance, an approved permit, a condition of approval, or an approved plan or submission has occurred, the Zoning Administrator shall issue a written Notice of Violation to the facility owner and operator and shall copy the property owner of record. The notice shall identify the nature of the violation, the corrective action required, and the deadline for compliance.

2. If the violation is not corrected within the time specified in the Notice of Violation, Jackson County may pursue one or more of the following remedies, as authorized by law and the Jackson County Zoning Ordinance:

- a. Civil citations and fines as provided by County code;
- b. Initiation of suspension or revocation proceedings for the Board of Adjustment approval or zoning permit, as applicable and as authorized by law;
- c. Initiation of civil abatement or nuisance proceedings under Iowa Code section 657, Chapter 11 of the Jackson County Zoning Ordinance, or other applicable law; and
- d. Recovery of County costs as provided in this ordinance.

3. [PENDING ATTORNEY REVIEW] Where a High-Density Computing Facility is operating in a manner that poses an imminent and documented threat to public health or safety, neighboring property, public infrastructure, or natural resources — including but not limited to uncontrolled hazardous-material release, fire or explosion risk, or repeated operation in violation of enforceable noise or vibration limits after notice and opportunity to cure — the County may seek immediate temporary injunctive relief or other lawful relief in a court of competent jurisdiction, or may pursue any temporary suspension mechanism otherwise authorized by Iowa law. This subsection shall be interpreted and applied only to the extent consistent with Iowa Code chapter 335 and other applicable law.

D. Abatement and Cost Recovery

If the facility owner and operator fail to timely remedy a violation or to complete required decommissioning or site restoration, Jackson County may, after notice and opportunity to cure as provided by this ordinance, enter the property and take such actions as are reasonably necessary to perform abatement, decommissioning, or site restoration.

The facility owner and operator shall be jointly and severally responsible for all reasonable costs incurred by Jackson County in connection with such work, including but not limited to administrative costs, contractor

costs, engineering or consultant review, inspection costs, recording costs, legal expenses, and site restoration costs.

Jackson County may recover such costs through any financial assurance required by this ordinance and may pursue any other remedy authorized by law, including lien procedures under Iowa Code section 331.384 if applicable.

E. Continuing Violations

Each day that a violation continues after the deadline for correction stated in a Notice of Violation, or after any extended deadline approved by Jackson County, shall constitute a separate violation. Civil penalties may be assessed for each day of continuing violation as provided by County code and the County Schedule of Fines and Fees.

F. Coordination with Other Authorities

Nothing in this ordinance limits the authority of Jackson County to refer matters to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, the State Fire Marshal, the County Engineer, the County Health Department, law enforcement, or any other local, state, or federal agency having jurisdiction over the matter. Referral to another agency does not preclude Jackson County from also pursuing enforcement under this ordinance.

Section 17. Miscellaneous Provisions

A. Non-Transferability

Any Conditional Use Permit or zoning permit issued under this ordinance is specific to the approved applicant, owner, operator, and project site, and shall not be transferred or assigned without prior written approval by the Zoning Administrator, or by the Board of Adjustment where required under the Jackson County Zoning Ordinance.

B. Conflict of Regulations

This ordinance shall be applied in coordination with other applicable federal, state, and local requirements. Where a conflict exists, the controlling authority shall govern.

C. Severability

If any section, clause, or provision of this ordinance is declared invalid or unconstitutional by a court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of the ordinance.

D. Periodic Review

The County shall review this ordinance at least every three (3) years, and may update it sooner as needed, to ensure continued alignment with evolving technologies, public infrastructure considerations, and applicable state and federal requirements.

E. Referenced Standards

Any reference in this ordinance to a statute, administrative rule, or technical standard—including but not limited to the Iowa Code, Iowa Administrative Code, NFPA, ANSI, IEC, or IDNR rules—shall mean the version in effect at the time of application, unless a specific edition or date is expressly stated. Where a successor or

equivalent standard exists, the County may accept compliance with the successor/equivalent standard upon a determination that it provides equal or greater protection and enforceability.

F. Owner and Operator Responsibility for Costs

Unless otherwise expressly provided in this ordinance, all costs associated with application preparation, technical studies, design, installation, utility extensions or upgrades, testing, monitoring, reporting, maintenance, remediation, decommissioning, restoration, and compliance with this ordinance shall be the responsibility of the facility owner and operator, jointly and severally, and shall not be borne by Jackson County.

G. Conditions of Approval; More Restrictive Standard Controls.

Where a condition of approval, approved site plan, approved study, recorded agreement, agency requirement, or other applicable law imposes a more restrictive requirement than this ordinance, the more restrictive requirement shall govern.

H. Other Permits, Approvals, and Private Obligations.

Approval under this ordinance does not relieve the facility owner, operator, applicant, or property owner from obtaining any other required local, state, or federal permits, licenses, registrations, approvals, inspections, or authorizations. Approval under this ordinance also does not relieve the owner or operator from compliance with private covenants, easements, lease terms, deed restrictions, utility agreements, or other private obligations applicable to the property.

I. Public Records and Confidential Information.

Application materials, studies, reports, plans, correspondence, and approvals submitted under this ordinance may be subject to Iowa public records laws. If an applicant believes any submitted material is confidential or protected from disclosure, the applicant shall clearly identify the specific material and the legal basis for the claimed protection at the time of submittal. Jackson County does not guarantee confidential treatment of submitted materials except as required or allowed by law.

J. No County Warranty or Assumption of Liability.

Approval under this ordinance shall not be construed as a warranty or representation by Jackson County that the facility is safe, suitable, profitable, properly engineered, compliant with private agreements, or compliant with all non-zoning laws. The facility owner and operator remain solely responsible for design, construction, operation, maintenance, compliance, decommissioning, restoration, and all costs and liabilities associated with the facility.

**DRAFT - M-2 HEAVY INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT
DATA CENTER AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AMENDMENT
DRAFT - FOR DISCUSSION ONLY - NOT ADOPTED LAW**

Prepared	October 6, 2026
Purpose	Policy discussion and City Attorney / Planning & Zoning review
Status	Project-generated draft; not adopted law; not legal advice
Uniformity	District-wide M-2 standards apply to all similarly situated businesses; enhanced review uses neutral impact thresholds.

**CITY OF CASCADE, IOWA
ORDINANCE NO. _____**

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 165 OF THE CASCADE ZONING ORDINANCE TO EXPRESSLY PERMIT DATA CENTERS AND HIGH-DENSITY COMPUTING FACILITIES IN THE M-2 HEAVY INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT AND TO ESTABLISH UNIFORM PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR M-2 INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

NOW, BE IT ENACTED by the City Council of the City of Cascade, Iowa, as follows:

SECTION I. SECTION 165.11 M-2 - PERMITTED PRINCIPAL USES

Section 165.11, M-2 Heavy Industrial District, subsection B, is amended by adding the following permitted principal use:

19. Data Center or High-Density Computing Facility.

A building or group of buildings principally used to house computer servers, data-processing equipment, networking equipment, electronic storage equipment, or other high-density computing systems, including cloud computing, colocation, artificial-intelligence computing, scientific computing, cryptocurrency computing or mining, and substantially similar uses.

Minimum required off-street parking: one space per employee on the largest regularly scheduled shift, plus one space for each company vehicle regularly stationed at the premises.

Computer rooms, telecommunications equipment, and server equipment that are incidental and subordinate to another permitted principal use shall not constitute a separate Data Center or High-Density Computing Facility.

SECTION II. SECTION 165.11 M-2 - SPECIAL EXCEPTION USES

Section 165.11, M-2 Heavy Industrial District, subsection D, is amended by adding:

8. Major Industrial Facility.

Any otherwise permitted principal use within the M-2 District meeting one or more of the following thresholds shall require Special Exception approval pursuant to Section 165.34(2):

1. Maximum anticipated coincident electrical demand of five megawatts (5 MW) or greater;
2. Anticipated industrial, process, cooling, or facility water demand of 25,000 gallons or more during any twenty-four-hour period;
3. Aggregate stationary electrical generation capacity, excluding fire pumps, of two megawatts (2 MW) or greater;
4. Aggregate stationary battery or other electrical-energy-storage capacity of five megawatt-hours (5 MWh) or greater; or
5. A material expansion of an existing facility that causes the facility to exceed any threshold above.

The requirements of this subsection shall apply **without regard to the business type, technology, product, customer, tenant, ownership structure, or industrial process involved.**

SECTION III. SECTION 165.11 M-2 - UNIFORM PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Subsection G, Special Requirements, is amended by adding the following provisions. These requirements supplement all other applicable provisions of Chapter 165.

1. Uniform Applicability

The requirements of this subsection apply uniformly to M-2 uses, structures, and operations unless a provision expressly establishes an objective physical or operational threshold. No requirement shall be imposed, waived, or varied solely because of the identity of the owner, operator, tenant, customer, industry, computing workload, product, or business model.

A lawful preexisting use, structure, or condition shall be treated in accordance with Sections 165.14 through 165.20 and other applicable law. To the maximum extent legally permissible, new construction, material expansion, replacement equipment, and materially modified operations after the effective date shall comply with the standards applicable to that work or modification.

2. Site Development Plan

Before issuance of a building permit for a new principal M-2 use or Major Industrial Facility, the applicant shall submit an engineered site development plan identifying, as applicable:

- buildings and structures;
- parking and loading areas;
- access roads;
- exterior mechanical and cooling equipment;
- generators;
- electrical substations and transformers;
- energy-storage systems;
- fuel and chemical storage;
- water and sewer connections;
- stormwater facilities;
- exterior lighting;
- landscaping and screening;
- fences;
- property boundaries; and
- existing sensitive receptors located within 1,000 feet of the property.

For a Major Industrial Facility, the plan shall additionally identify maximum anticipated electrical load, water demand, stationary generation capacity, fuel storage, cooling technology, principal noise-generating equipment, and proposed phasing.

3. Operational Noise

All M-2 uses shall be designed, constructed, operated, and maintained so that noise attributable to the use does not exceed the following standards, measured in accordance with generally accepted professional acoustic practice:

a. M-2 property-line standard: 65 dBA and 75 dBC hourly average at any property boundary, except where the residential/sensitive-receptor standard below is more restrictive.

b. Residential or sensitive-receptor standard: At the exterior wall or outdoor use area of an existing dwelling, school, licensed child-care facility, hospital, nursing facility, place of worship, public library, or comparable occupied sensitive use:

- 55 dBA and 65 dBC from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.; and
- 50 dBA and 60 dBC from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.

c. Tonal noise: Where an industrial sound source produces a prominent recurring tone, whine, screech, or hum, the applicable A-weighted limit shall be reduced by five (5) decibels.

d. Measurement: Noise measurements and modeling shall use generally accepted professional acoustic practices, including applicable ANSI/ASA S12.9 procedures or successor standards where appropriate.

4. Acoustic Study and Verification

Every Major Industrial Facility shall provide, at the applicant's expense:

6. A preconstruction baseline acoustic evaluation;
7. A predictive acoustic model demonstrating compliance at property boundaries and nearby sensitive receptors under maximum reasonably anticipated operating conditions, including hot-weather conditions where relevant;
8. A post-construction compliance test after the facility reaches normal operating load; and
9. A new compliance evaluation at least once every five (5) years, or following a material modification reasonably expected to affect noise levels.

The City may require reasonable corrective measures where testing demonstrates noncompliance.

5. Generator and Elevated-Noise Testing

Routine and pre-planned testing of stationary generators or other equipment producing substantially elevated noise shall occur only between **8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday**, except where operation outside those hours is:

10. Required during an actual emergency;
11. Necessary to protect life, property, or critical equipment;
12. Required by a governmental agency, applicable code, manufacturer, utility, insurer, or reliability authority; or
13. Specifically authorized by the Zoning Administrator because the testing cannot reasonably be completed during ordinary testing hours.

This restriction applies uniformly to M-2 businesses operating such equipment. Emergency-engine operation shall also comply with applicable state and federal air-quality requirements.

6. Generator Operating Records

Any M-2 facility having aggregate stationary generation capacity of two (2) MW or more shall maintain records identifying:

- date and duration of each operation;
- whether the operation was emergency or non-emergency;
- reason for operation; and
- equipment operated.

Records shall be retained for at least three (3) years and made available to the City upon reasonable request for zoning-compliance purposes, subject to applicable public-record and confidentiality law.

7. Major Industrial Facility Setbacks

Existing M-2 dimensional requirements shall remain applicable generally. In addition, for a new Major Industrial Facility:

14. A principal building shall be located at least 100 feet from a property boundary adjoining a residential zoning district.
15. Stationary generators, exterior cooling equipment, large transformers, substations, compressors, industrial fans, and comparable exterior mechanical equipment shall be located at least 200 feet from a residential zoning district boundary.
16. The Board of Adjustment may approve a reduced equipment setback, but never less than 100 feet, where an applicant-funded independent acoustic analysis demonstrates that all applicable noise standards will be met under maximum reasonably anticipated operating conditions.

Nothing in this subsection authorizes a setback reduction that conflicts with any other applicable code, easement, fire requirement, or utility clearance.

8. Exterior Lighting

All new or replacement exterior lighting within the M-2 District shall:

- 17. Be fully shielded and directed downward;
- 18. Be designed to prevent direct glare onto residential property and public streets;
- 19. Not exceed 0.5 foot-candle at a residential zoning boundary, excluding existing public street lighting;
and
- 20. Use automatic controls or reduced lighting levels during periods when full illumination is unnecessary, except for safety, security, and emergency lighting.

9. Screening

Exterior mechanical equipment, generators, fuel tanks, refuse areas, substations, and comparable industrial equipment visible from an adjoining residential district or public right-of-way shall be screened through landscaping, berms, walls, fencing, equipment enclosures, or a combination thereof.

Screening shall not interfere with required ventilation, fire access, utility clearance, security, or equipment safety.

10. Water Use and Cooling

Any M-2 use reasonably expected to use **25,000 gallons or more of water in a twenty-four-hour period** shall provide:

- 21. Projected average and peak water demand;
- 22. Identification of the proposed water source;
- 23. Applicable Iowa Department of Natural Resources permits, approvals, or documentation;
- 24. An engineering analysis demonstrating adequate water supply without unreasonable interference with existing users;
- 25. Separate metering of material industrial or cooling-water use where practicable; and
- 26. Annual water-use reporting to the City.

Once-through cooling using potable municipal water is prohibited for new Major Industrial Facilities.

Closed-loop or non-evaporative cooling shall be preferred. An evaporative system may be approved where professional engineering demonstrates that the alternative will not create an unreasonable demand upon municipal water resources and adequately controls drift, plume, condensation, and icing.

11. Electrical Utility Verification

Before issuance of a building permit for any M-2 use having maximum anticipated electrical demand of five (5) MW or more, the applicant shall provide written documentation from the serving electric utility confirming that:

27. The proposed maximum electrical demand has been disclosed;
28. Required utility infrastructure and service upgrades have been identified sufficiently for the utility to provide service;
29. Responsibility for project-specific utility improvements has been addressed between the utility and customer; and
30. The facility's electrical service may be constructed and operated in accordance with applicable utility, electrical, and safety requirements.

Nothing in this ordinance regulates electric rates, utility service territories, generation procurement, or matters preempted or otherwise committed by law to a public utility, electric cooperative, state agency, or federal authority.

12. Fuel, Batteries, Hazardous Materials, and Emergency Response

A Major Industrial Facility shall provide an Emergency Response Plan to the City and appropriate emergency-response agencies before occupancy.

The plan shall identify, where applicable:

- emergency contacts;
- facility access;
- electrical disconnects;
- generator locations;
- fuel quantities and shutoffs;
- coolant and chemical inventories;

- battery-energy-storage systems;
- fire-suppression systems;
- evacuation procedures;
- spill response; and
- procedures for providing emergency responders access to the site.

The plan shall be reviewed following material facility modifications and at reasonable intervals requested by the City or responding agencies.

13. Heat Rejection, Drift, Condensation, and Icing

No M-2 mechanical exhaust, cooling, or heat-rejection system shall be operated in a manner that causes ice, condensate, cooling-tower drift, mist, or similar discharge to accumulate upon an adjoining property or public right-of-way or create an unreasonable safety hazard.

14. Stormwater and Drainage

All new M-2 development shall comply with applicable City, state, and federal stormwater requirements.

A Major Industrial Facility shall submit engineered stormwater calculations demonstrating that development will not cause an unlawful or unreasonable increase in off-site flooding, erosion, or drainage impacts.

The property owner shall be responsible for repair of documented project-caused damage to City drainage infrastructure to the extent permitted by law.

15. Public Infrastructure

Where an M-2 development creates a documented need for road, water, sewer, drainage, emergency-service, or other public improvements beyond existing system capacity, the City may require a development or infrastructure agreement allocating proportionate project-related costs to the applicant to the extent permitted by Iowa law.

This provision shall apply equally to every M-2 development creating the same type and degree of infrastructure burden.

16. Decommissioning of Major Industrial Facilities

An application for a Major Industrial Facility shall include a decommissioning plan describing:

31. Anticipated facility life;
32. Equipment and structures to be removed;
33. Environmental remediation and site restoration;
34. Estimated decommissioning cost;
35. Salvage assumptions; and
36. Proposed method of financial assurance.

A facility shall be considered abandoned when its principal industrial operation has ceased continuously for twelve (12) months, excluding temporary shutdowns caused by reconstruction, documented market conditions accompanied by evidence of a bona fide intent to resume operations, casualty, litigation, government order, utility interruption, or similar circumstances approved by the Zoning Administrator.

Following abandonment, decommissioning shall be completed within twelve (12) months unless extended for good cause.

The form and amount of financial assurance shall be established in a manner approved by the City Attorney and shall be reasonably related to the documented cost of decommissioning and site restoration.

17. Material Expansion

An approved Major Industrial Facility shall require an updated Special Exception review where a proposed modification would increase any of the following by **twenty percent (20%) or more** above the previously approved maximum:

- electrical demand;
- water demand;
- stationary generation capacity;
- energy-storage capacity;
- exterior mechanical-equipment capacity; or
- developed building area.

Crossing a Major Industrial Facility threshold for the first time shall require Special Exception approval regardless of percentage increase.

18. Compliance, Inspection, and Corrective Action

The Zoning Administrator may require documentation reasonably necessary to verify compliance with conditions of approval and the objective standards of this section. Where specialized testing or engineering is reasonably required because of a credible compliance question involving a Major Industrial Facility, the City may require the owner or operator to provide qualified professional testing, subject to applicable law and any fee or cost-recovery provisions adopted by the City.

Nothing in this section limits other remedies available under Chapter 165 or applicable law.

SECTION IV. SECTION 165.41 - DEFINITIONS

Section 165.41 is amended by adding the following definitions:

Data Center or High-Density Computing Facility: A building, structure, or portion thereof principally used for the operation of networked computer servers, electronic data-processing equipment, digital storage, artificial-intelligence computing, cloud computing, colocation, scientific computing, cryptocurrency computing or mining, or substantially similar high-density computing activities. Ordinary computer rooms, telecommunications equipment, and server equipment incidental and subordinate to another principal use are excluded.

Major Industrial Facility: Any M-2 use meeting one or more objective thresholds established in Section 165.11, M-2 Heavy Industrial District, subsection D(8).

Material Expansion: An enlargement or operational modification meeting the thresholds established in Section 165.11, M-2 Heavy Industrial District, subsection G(17).

Sensitive Receptor: An occupied dwelling, school, licensed child-care facility, hospital, nursing facility, place of worship, public library, public park facility, or comparable occupied use where protection from continuous industrial noise is reasonably necessary.

SECTION V. CONFLICTS AND MORE RESTRICTIVE REQUIREMENTS

Nothing in this ordinance relieves a property owner or operator from compliance with any other applicable City, county, state, federal, utility, fire, building, environmental, or safety requirement. Where two applicable zoning provisions regulate the same subject and can lawfully be applied together, the more restrictive provision shall control, consistent with Section 165.03.

SECTION VI. SEVERABILITY

If any section, subsection, paragraph, sentence, clause, phrase, or application of this ordinance is adjudged invalid or unconstitutional, such adjudication shall not affect the validity of the ordinance as a whole or any other section, provision, or application not adjudged invalid or unconstitutional.

SECTION VII. EFFECTIVE DATE

This ordinance shall be in full force and effect after its final passage, approval, and publication as provided by law.

NON-CODIFIED DRAFTING NOTES AND SOURCE BASIS

The material below is explanatory and is not intended to be codified as part of Chapter 165. It documents why specific concepts appear in the draft and identifies issues for legal and technical review.

A. October 1, 2026 Simple Mining Community Forum

The October 1 forum materially clarified the proposed Cascade project. The company represented that its current concept is approximately 60,000 square feet on roughly 15.2 acres, with an approximately 40 MW electrical load, 24/7/365 operation, closed-loop hydrocooling with dry/air-cooled heat rejection, approximately 15 backup diesel generators, and 20-25 projected permanent jobs. The company also expressed willingness in principle to accept enforceable noise, water, emergency-planning, screening, decommissioning, and expansion-related conditions.

These statements are representations from the forum and are not substitutes for final engineered plans, permits, utility agreements, or binding conditions. Repository record:
`dataset/28\_SIMPLE\_MINING\_COMMUNITY\_FORUM\_2026-10-01.md`.

B. Uniform District-Wide Approach

This draft intentionally avoids regulating Simple Mining, cryptocurrency mining, or data centers as uniquely disfavored businesses. It adds data centers as an expressly recognized M-2 use while regulating physical impacts through standards that apply throughout the district or through neutral thresholds such as MW demand, water use, generator capacity, and battery-storage capacity.

The approach should be reviewed for consistency with Iowa Code Chapter 414, including the zoning-uniformity provisions of Iowa Code section 414.2.

Official Iowa Legislature source:

<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/414.2.pdf>

C. Nearby Iowa Comparators

Linn County

Linn County's 2026 data-center ordinance provides useful measurable provisions involving setbacks, acoustic studies, recurring sound testing, emergency planning, road impacts, and water review. Its noise framework includes

55 dBA / 65 dBC for adjacent residential occupied structures and 65 dBA / 75 dBC for adjacent nonresidential occupied structures, along with recurring acoustic testing.

Official ordinance:

<https://www.linncountyiowa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/27695/PA26-0001-Ordinance-PDF>

Staff report:

<https://www.linncountyiowa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/27694/PA26-0001-Data-Centers-Ordinance-Staff-Report---3rd-Consideration-PDF>

Jones County

Jones County Ordinance 2025-02 includes special-use/site-plan review, applicant-funded third-party noise analysis, cooling and water documentation, electric-utility verification, emergency planning, and decommissioning. It includes continuous-noise limits and a five-decibel adjustment for prominent steady tones, and requires liquid/closed-loop cooling for the regulated use.

Copy hosted by Linn County:

<https://www.linncountyiowa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/27656/Jones-County-Data-Center-Ordinance>

Other comparators

The project repository also tracks the City of Palo EU-1 district, Jackson County working drafts, Allamakee County policy, Norwalk Project West, and West Des Moines data-center development examples in ``dataset/06_IOWA_DATA_CENTER_POLICY_COMPARATORS.md``.

D. Water Threshold

The 25,000-gallon-per-day threshold is used as an objective industrial-impact trigger because Iowa water-use permitting law generally uses a 25,000-gallon quantity in a 24-hour period as a significant regulatory threshold. City Attorney and engineering review should confirm the best local wording and interaction with Iowa DNR permitting.

Iowa Administrative Code Chapter 50:

<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/iac/chapter/567.50.pdf>

E. Acoustic Standards

The draft's dBA/dBC structure is intended to address both ordinary audible sound and low-frequency industrial hum. The reference to ANSI/ASA S12.9 provides a recognized environmental-noise measurement framework rather than creating a project-specific testing method.

ANSI/ASA standards catalog:

<https://webstore.ansi.org/>

F. Stationary Generators

The draft distinguishes routine testing from actual emergencies and requires uniform testing-hour rules across M-2 businesses. Federal stationary-engine requirements should continue to control where applicable; zoning should not attempt to replace air permitting or emissions regulation.

U.S. EPA stationary-engine information:

<https://www.epa.gov/stationary-engines>

G. Items Better Addressed Outside the Zoning Ordinance

The following matters are generally better addressed through a development agreement, economic-development agreement, utility agreement, or other lawful contractual mechanism rather than being written as project-specific zoning requirements:

- LEED certification or equivalent sustainability certification;
- local hiring and workforce-development commitments;
- wage or benefit commitments;
- community-benefit payments;
- tax-incentive terms;
- project-specific infrastructure reimbursement mechanics;
- voluntary limits below otherwise applicable zoning thresholds; and
- project-specific representations concerning jobs, investment, tenant mix, or expansion.

If the City wants any of these concepts to become district-wide zoning rules, they should be rewritten to apply uniformly to all similarly situated M-2 businesses and reviewed for statutory authority.

H. Required Legal Review Before Introduction

The City Attorney should specifically review:

37. Whether the Major Industrial Facility thresholds and Special Exception structure fit Cascade's current Section 165.34 procedure;
38. Application of new performance standards to existing lawful uses and nonconformities;
39. Authority and process for applicant-funded independent studies and compliance testing;
40. Financial-assurance authority and acceptable decommissioning instruments;
41. Cost-recovery and infrastructure-agreement authority;
42. Public-record treatment of security-sensitive facility information;
43. State or federal preemption affecting utilities, air emissions, fuel storage, batteries, and emergency systems;
44. Whether any separate general noise, nuisance, fire-code, or building-code amendments should accompany the zoning amendment; and
45. Final numbering and integration with all amendments to Chapter 165 adopted after the base zoning text.

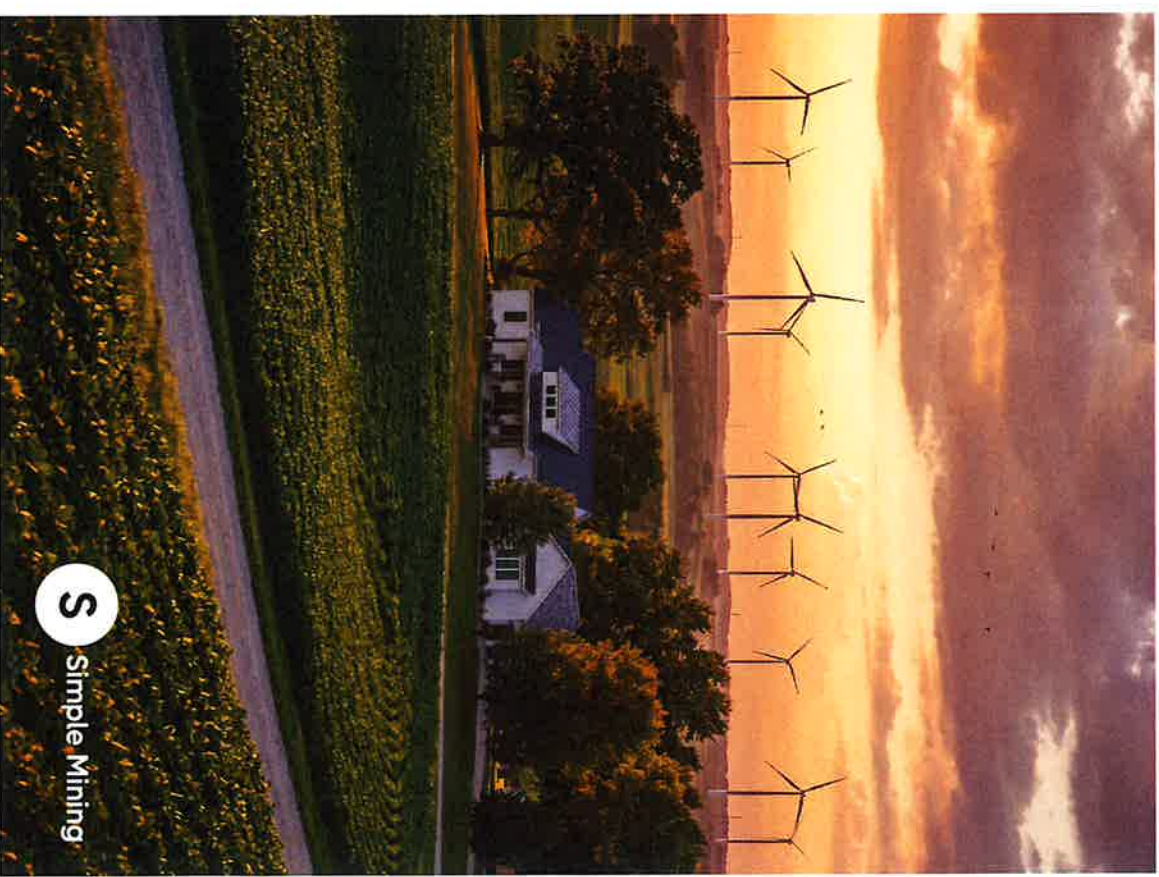
CASCADE COMMUNITY FORUM

Good evening, Cascade.



Thank you for having us.

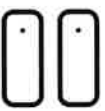
October 1, 2026



Simple Mining

Your Questions Shaped Tonight

We read every question that came in.



What We're Proposing



The Site



Energy



Water & Cooling



Noise



Safety,
Environment & Health



Jobs



Benefits to Cascade



Zoning & Accountability

If we don't get to yours tonight, email me directly: adam@simplemining.io



Simple Mining

Who We Are

An Iowa company, headquartered in Cedar Falls

Iowa-based. Founded in 2021 and headquartered in Cedar Falls. We operate multiple data centers.

We started in Bitcoin. This project began as a Bitcoin-mining proposal. It is now a traditional data center.

We own the lot. Lot 2 in the Cascade Industrial Park. We bought it from the Cascade Economic Development Corporation in 2025.



Our team in Cedar Falls

S

Simple Mining



What We're Proposing

A traditional data center. Not crypto mining.



WHERE THIS STARTED

A Bitcoin-mining site built from modular containers.



WHAT WE'RE PROPOSING NOW

A traditional data center inside one permanent building, not modular containers.



Simple Mining

Why This Matters

Data centers are already a part of our daily lives



Email



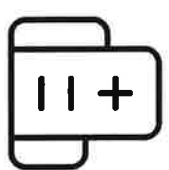
iMessage



Online Banking



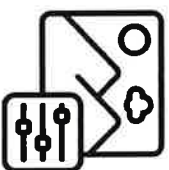
Social Media



Hospitals &
Health Records



Netflix &
Streaming



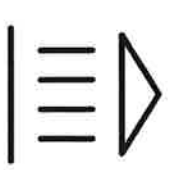
iCloud + Photos



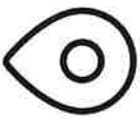
Maps & Nav



Search & Web

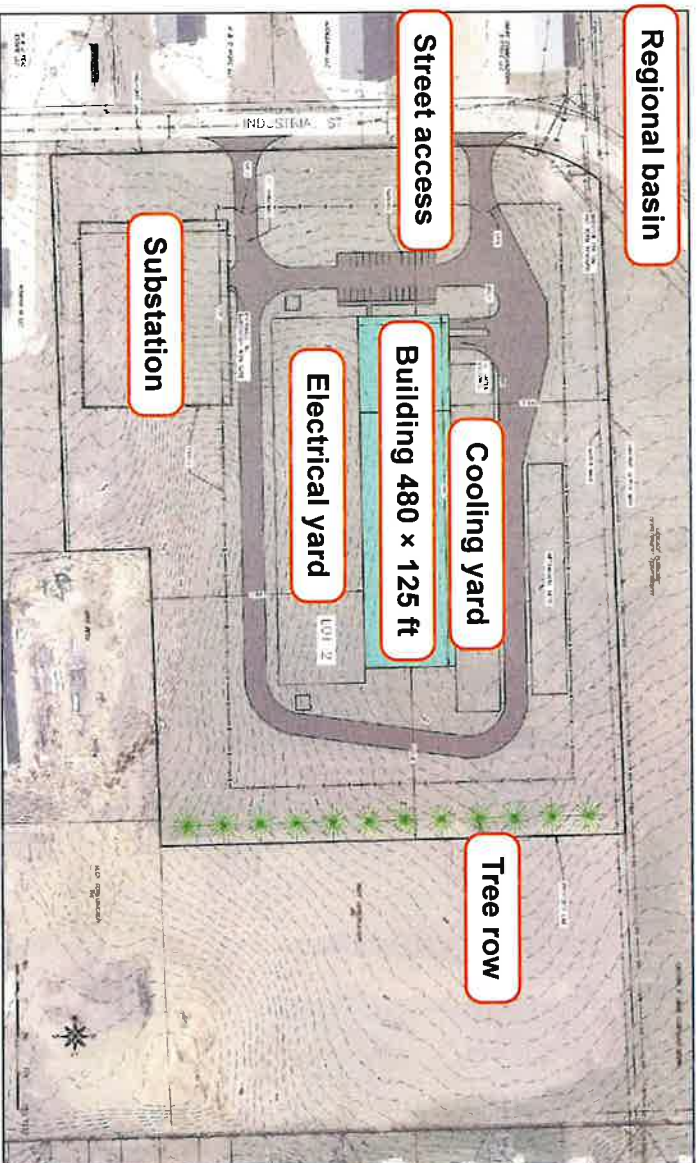


Government
Services



The Site

A concept plan. It will change with engineering.



Concept site plan: Fehr Graham Engineering & Environmental, Sept. 25, 2026. Preliminary.

- One building, 480 x 125 ft. About 25 ft at the eave, 31 ft at the peak.
- The building sits 216 to 291 ft from every property line.
- Tree row planned along the east side.
- No on-site stormwater pond needed. The regional basin across the road was built for this part of the park.



Simple Mining

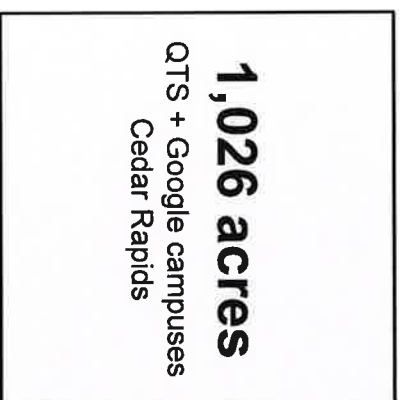


A Sense of Scale

Cascade compared with the Cedar Rapids data center campus

Land

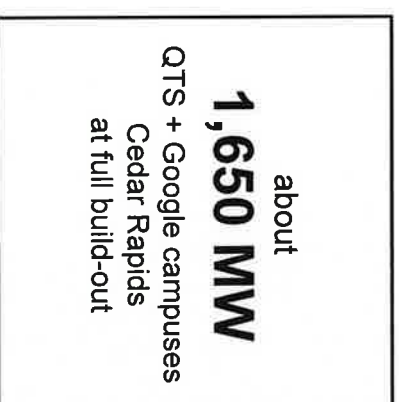
Cedar Rapids campus: about 67 times the size



This project
15.22 acres

Power

Cedar Rapids campus: about 41 times the power



This project
about 40 MW

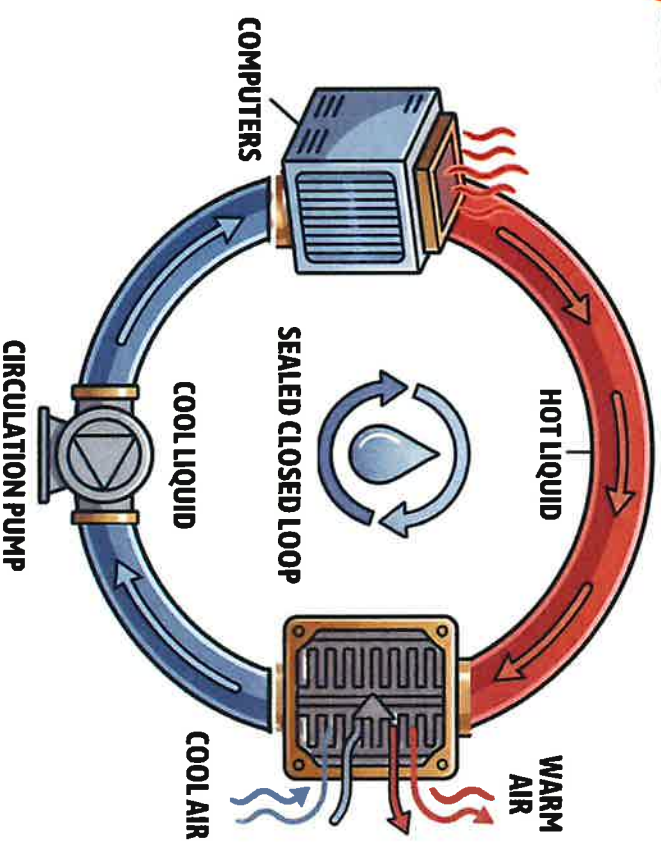
Squares are drawn to scale by area. Cedar Rapids: QTS, 612 acres and about 1,050 MW; Google, 414 acres and 600 MW; side by side in the Big Cedar Industrial Center; power at full build-out. Sources: The Gazette (Apr. 24, 2026); Clean Energy Districts of Iowa.

Water & Cooling

The same water, used again and again

Not all data centers drink the same:

- Closed-loop cooling — the **SAME** coolant, recirculated.
- No cooling towers. **NO** visible plume.
- Minimal water use. Figures are not final until the design is.



Noise



Clear limits, and a site built to meet them



Clear Limits

We will abide by the noise limits common to industrial areas. We recommend clear, enforceable rules.



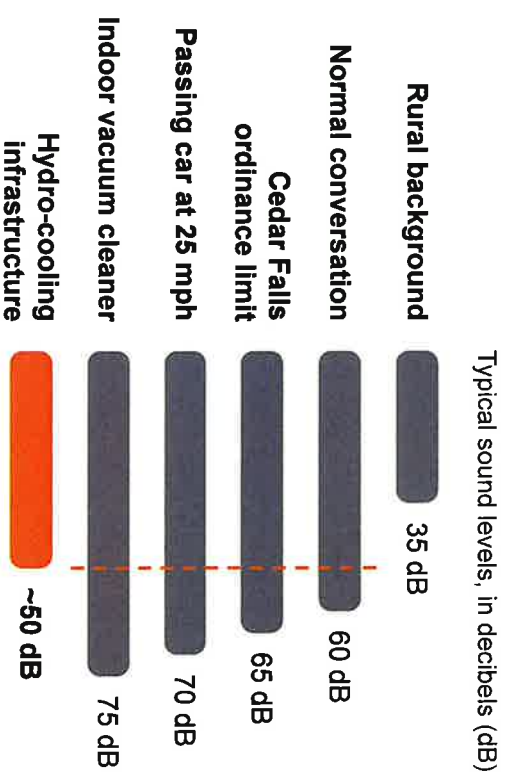
Quiet, Proven Cooling

Closed-loop cooling is very quiet. It is a common technology that many businesses use.



See It for Yourself

The 50 MW hydro-cooled site we operate in Manchester has run 24/7 for a year with zero complaints. Tours are welcome.



We do make some sound, but it is minimal. We are investing here for the long term, and clear rules give neighbors and us the same certainty.



Simple Mining



Safety, Environment & Health

Built to code, permitted and monitored around the clock



Backup Generators

Backup only. Tested periodically. Operated under a state air permit.



Utility Outages

The site would run on its own battery backup and generators, monitored 24/7.



Health

The main concerns are noise and generator emissions. We address both at the source.



Stormwater

Would drain to the regional basin across the road. The City confirmed in writing that it was built for this part of the park.



Batteries & Fire Suppression

Built to code.



Electronic Waste

Handled per federal, state and local rules.

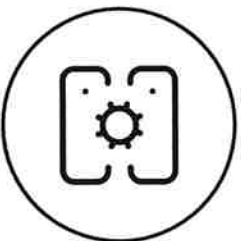


We are designing to a LEED standard. LEED is the U.S. Green Building Council's green-building rating system. It covers design, construction and how the building operates.



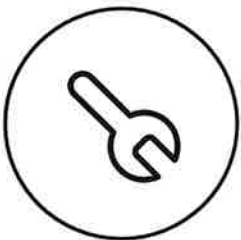
Jobs

The roles this site would bring



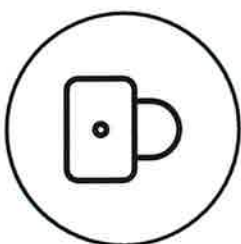
Operations

Operations technicians
and site management



Maintenance

Electrical and mechanical
maintenance



Security & IT

Site security
and IT staff

We intend to hire locally, working with NICC and local partners to develop local talent.



Full Medical Benefits



Paid Time Off



Career Path

Benefits shown are for Simple Mining positions. Headcount and wages will be shared later.



Simple Mining

Energy



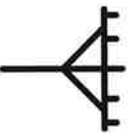
Power would come from MVEC, through a new substation



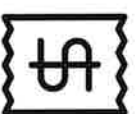
Maquoketa Valley –
Simple Mining Relationship



Electric System Capacity



System Upgrades



Impact on Rates



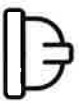
Benefits to Cascade

A material investment in Cascade



A Material Investment

A permanent building means a material investment in Cascade and material new taxable value.



Work for Area Businesses

We intend to use area contractors and Iowa suppliers where we can.



No Cost Shift on Power

MVEC's position: Simple Mining pays 100% of the costs it causes.



Local Jobs

Operations, maintenance, security and IT roles. We intend to hire locally.



Wages That Stay Local

Local hires mean wages that stay in the community.



A Community Partner

We support local causes in the communities where we operate.



Simple Mining

Zoning & Accountability



The City sets the rules. We will work within them.



The City Sets the Rules

Cascade is updating its ordinance. That is where the rules for data centers get set.



Enforceable Conditions

Conditions become enforceable through the City's ordinance process.



A Permanent Building

Built to code, permitted and inspected. A long-term investment in Cascade.



How to Reach Us

Email me directly:

adam@simplemining.io

S

Simple Mining

How We'll Be Good Neighbors



Clear Noise Limits

We support clear, enforceable noise limits, and we will meet them.



Closed-Loop Cooling

No cooling towers. Minimal water use.



Who Pays for Power

MVEC's position: Simple Mining pays 100% of the costs it causes.



Backup-Only Generators

Tested periodically, under a state air permit.



A Well-Screened Site

We are committed to an attractive site, screened with trees and fencing.



Rules Set by the City

We will work within Cascade's data center ordinance.



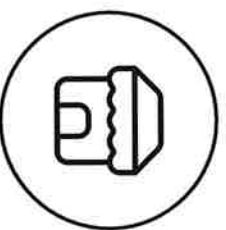
Simple Mining



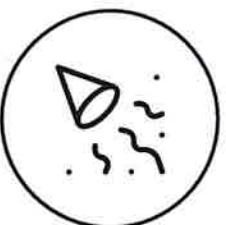
How We Give Back

We want to be a good community partner

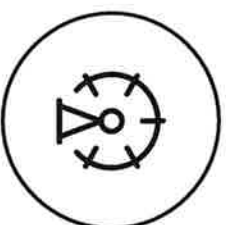
In the Iowa communities where we operate, we have supported:



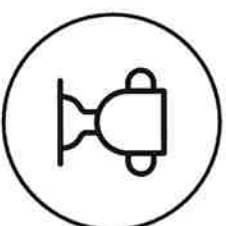
**Area economic
development**



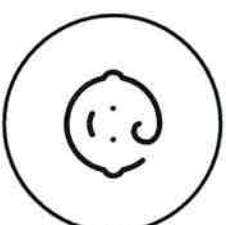
**Fourth of July
celebrations**



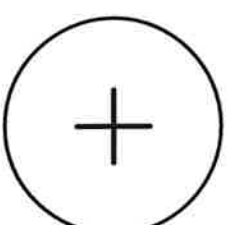
County fairs



**High school
booster clubs**



Day cares

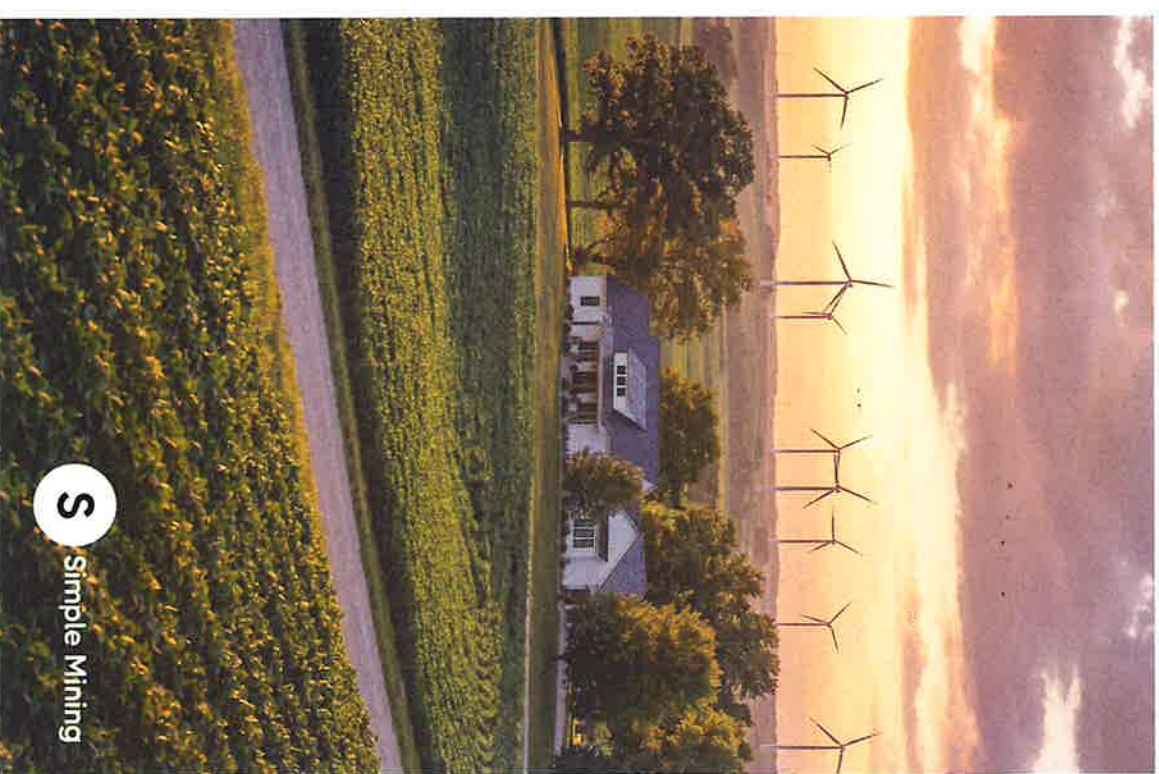


And more

Our Ask

Support an ordinance that allows **responsible data center development** in Cascade.

*An investment in Cascade's tax base.
We intend to hire locally.*



In Closing

We want to be a good neighbor in Cascade

We are asking for a fair look at the facts.

We will be open and transparent with Cascade.

If we didn't get to your question tonight, email me:
adam@simplemining.io

Thank you for your time tonight.



Adam Haynes
Founder & CEO