



Data Centers: Zoning Ordinance

Planning Commission & City Council Workshop

November 10, 2025

Data Center Timeline Review: City Land Use Process Events & Actions



The timeline below illustrates the research, review, and decisions by city council, boards, and commissions related to the general introduction of data center land uses within the city.

Event & Details	Materials
July 22, 2024: City Council Special Meeting Topic: Data Center Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agenda Minutes (PDF)
September 23, 2024: Special Joint City Council & Planning Commission & Economic Development Authority Workshop Topic: Data Center Discussion & Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agenda Minutes (PDF)
February 4, 2025: Planning Commission Regular Meeting Public Hearing: Item 2A. Comprehensive Plan Amendment for Technology Industry Land Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agenda Minutes (PDF)
February 24, 2025: City Council Regular Meeting Item 4A. Comprehensive Plan Amendment for Technology Industry Land Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agenda Minutes (PDF)
June 2, 2025: City Council Special Meeting Topic: Discussion on Data Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agenda Minutes (PDF)
July 1, 2025: Planning Commission Workshop Topic: Draft Data Center Zoning Ordinance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agenda Minutes (PDF)
July 21, 2025: Special City Council & Planning Commission Joint Workshop Topic: Draft Data Center Zoning Ordinance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agenda Minutes (PDF)
August 19, 2025: Planning Commission Special Meeting Public Hearing: Item 2. Draft Data Center Zoning Ordinance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agenda Draft minutes to be approved 11/3
September 2, 2025: Planning Commission Regular Meeting Continued Public Hearing: Item 2A. Data Center Zoning Ordinance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agenda Draft minutes to be approved 11/3
September 24, 2025: Special City Council & Planning Commission Joint Workshop Topic: Draft Data Center Zoning Ordinance; Public Question & Answer Following the Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agenda Minutes Not Yet Available
October 7, 2025: Special City Council & Planning Commission Joint Workshop Topic: Draft Data Center Zoning Ordinance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agenda Minutes (PDF)
November 3, 2025: Special City Council & Planning Commission Joint Workshop Topic: Draft Data Center Zoning Ordinance	

Purpose

- Review ordinance revisions to address concerns or questions raised during the hearing and workshops
- Planning Commission & City Council feedback
 - Are there concerns we have not addressed?



- Data Center PUD review process unique to this specific use type
 - Allow data center or data center campus, but only within a DCPUD
 - Requires each project to be reviewed individually for rezoning to DCPUD
 - Not subject to the current PUD ordinance process; provides adapted process and submittals specific to use and its impacts
 - Addresses the complexity and variety of the use
 - **More focus on the mitigation of potential impacts to surrounding land use through required minimum Performance Standards**
 - Less focus on internal site planning in application submittal requirements and review

To be consistent with the 2040 Plan, the ordinance for data centers is intended to:

- Pay for demand on public services
- Create a significant net positive in terms of fiscal and economic impacts for the City
- Meet City land use objectives, both short and long term
- Do not consume light industrial land that cannot be replaced by other adequate land supplies to meet City's economic development goals
- Have light industrial impact on surrounding property during normal operations
- Minimize impacts on surrounding property in terms of scope, intensity, and duration
- Comply with all City and State regulations and requirements

Considerations

- Are the criteria for rezoning decision strong and inclusive enough?
- Does the ordinance require enough submittal information at appropriate points to:
 - Provide the information necessary to evaluate against the criteria?
 - Allow the City to evaluate impact and mitigation?
 - Is additional language needed for additional reasonable and related conditions?
 - Is there enough information to make a future land use decision about data center development in Monticello?
- Are there any additional comments on the specific minimum performance standards?
- Have we indicated/required enough specificity in the required studies and agreements for public improvements?
- Does the text of the ordinance adequately put the burden of proof on the applicant?

The draft ordinance is structured around the following elements:

1. DCPUD Performance Standards
2. Application Submittal Requirements
3. Review Process
4. Site Improvement Plan Agreement
5. Administration: Timing, Performance, Amendment, Enforcement

Development Density

- Minimum data center floor area ratio (DCFAR) of .25

Revisions:

- Added language relating to phasing:
 - FAR for any individual phase of the DCPUD shall be .25
- Added a definition:
 - *Data center floor area ratio (DCFAR)*: The floor area ratio for a data center facility shall be defined as the ratio obtained by dividing the total gross floor area of the principal data center building(s) by the total gross land area of the proposed Data Center Planned Unit Development, less the square footage of stormwater ponding or public waters (measured from ordinary high water level), wetlands (measured from the delineation line), easements necessary for public improvements, right of way required to be platted for any purpose, and land area for required setbacks and perimeter buffer yards

- Must comply with State of MN (MPCA) requirements:
 - “The statutory limits for a residential location are L10 = 65 dBA and L50 = 60 dBA during the daytime (7:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.) and L10 = 55 dBA and L50 = 50 dBA during the nighttime (10:00 p.m. – 7:00 a.m.) (Minn. R. 7030.0040)”
 - During the one-hour period of monitoring, daytime noise levels cannot exceed 65 dBA for more than 10 percent of the time or 60 dBA more than 50 percent of the time
 - 65 dBA is similar to the sound of a loud conversation, the average noise level in an open office environment, and within general range of a vacuum cleaner or a washing machine
 - Set based on Noise Area Classification and on the land use of the person who hears the noise

Revisions:

- Ambient noise study submitted at Development Stage application
- Required monitoring by third party at 1000’ spacing and DCPUD corners, remedy is legal system
- Limited generator testing to 8AM-4PM, M-F; requires testing schedule
- Security requirement in Site Improvement Plan Agreement

Minimum Setbacks & Building Height

- Prior setback was 100' from any property line and 200' from residential or park/open space for all principal and accessory structures
- Prior height limit was 65' for both principal and accessory structures

Revisions:

- Insertion of a setback table:
 - Equipment site and building design impacts applicable setback
 - Further differentiated based on both actual and proposed adjacent uses
 - Separate accessory use setbacks
 - Usable area for walls, parking, loading, etc.
- Lowered height to 50'
 - Added accessory and appurtenant structure height allowance at an additional 15' in height (mechanical equipment)

Buffering & Screening

- Ordinance requirements for site landscaping, screening, perimeter buffering
 - Outdoor facilities or equipment such as generators, parking, mechanical equipment, security chain link fencing are required to be fully screened to 100% opacity when viewed at comparable grade from abutting property used, zoned, or guided for residential or recreational uses, and from the public street
 - Rooftop mechanical equipment screened from the adjoining property by screening walls or parapets
 - Screening through individual or combination use of fencing or walls, landscaping, and/or berming
 - Buildings or building wing walls meeting the materials requirements may also be used for screening
 - Buffer required installed around the entire perimeter of the DCPUD and maintained for the duration of facility operation

Buffering & Screening

Revisions:

- Concept landscaping plan submission
- Clarified landscaping requirements:
 - Meet base code requirements for materials and placement, except as stated
 - Sod and irrigation requirement
 - Exempt from parking lot landscaping
- Clarified screening requirements:
 - Where screening is required, must meet 100% screening within 3 years – Discuss building exposures
 - Quantities may be counted toward base landscaping requirements
 - Landscaping materials and berms may be within setback, faces and walls subject to setback table
- Clarified perimeter buffer requirements:
 - Required regardless of intervening ROW
 - Must include evergreen species
 - Must be completed with first phase of development
 - Not required where directly abutting industrial uses (**remove zoning and guidance**)

Utility Impacts

- Required study identifying both City and private utility supply and demand on systems (water, sewer, storm) and demonstrating that the facility:
 - Can be adequately served by the existing or planned capacity of the utility
 - Will not impede access or limit service capacity to those utilities by other future users in the City's planning and service territory
- Study components:
 - Utility phasing plan aligning with the proposed development phasing and timing;
 - Preliminary plans for extension of all public facilities, including utilities, roadways, pedestrian facilities, and other such public infrastructure facilities to the furthest extent of the DCPPUD property boundary
- Site improvement plan agreement (SIPA)
 - City-installed improvements

Revisions:

- Additional requirement statements:
 - Designed to provide adequate service to the furthest extent of the DCPUD
 - Sufficient information regarding the financial capacity to support the required improvements
- Additional study components:
 - Analysis of impacts to surrounding private utility systems and mitigation required
 - Deficiencies in the public system pursuant to the project and mitigation plan for deficiencies
 - Updates or additional system plans or studies for public utilities reflecting the impact of increased demands and infrastructure required by the DCPUD
 - Analysis of projected cost of public infrastructure necessary to adequately serve project, by phase
 - Sufficient information regarding the applicant's financial capacity to support the required system studies, public improvements and system upgrades
 - Companion review study for capacity and demand greater than anticipated
- Site improvement plan agreement for developer-installed improvements to include securities, escrows, guarantees and timing

Transportation Impact

- Traffic study evaluating:
 - Volumes for passenger vehicles during normal operations
 - Traffic volumes and routes for construction traffic during each phase of site development;
 - Any insufficient street or intersection design pursuant to project;
- Routes and frequency of commercial vehicle traffic
- Location of pathway connections

Revisions:

- Volume of commercial traffic
- Location of ROW to extent of PUD
- Proposed improvements and projected cost
- Sufficient information regarding capacity for support improvements
- Greater detail in SIPA requirements to support above

Power Consumption

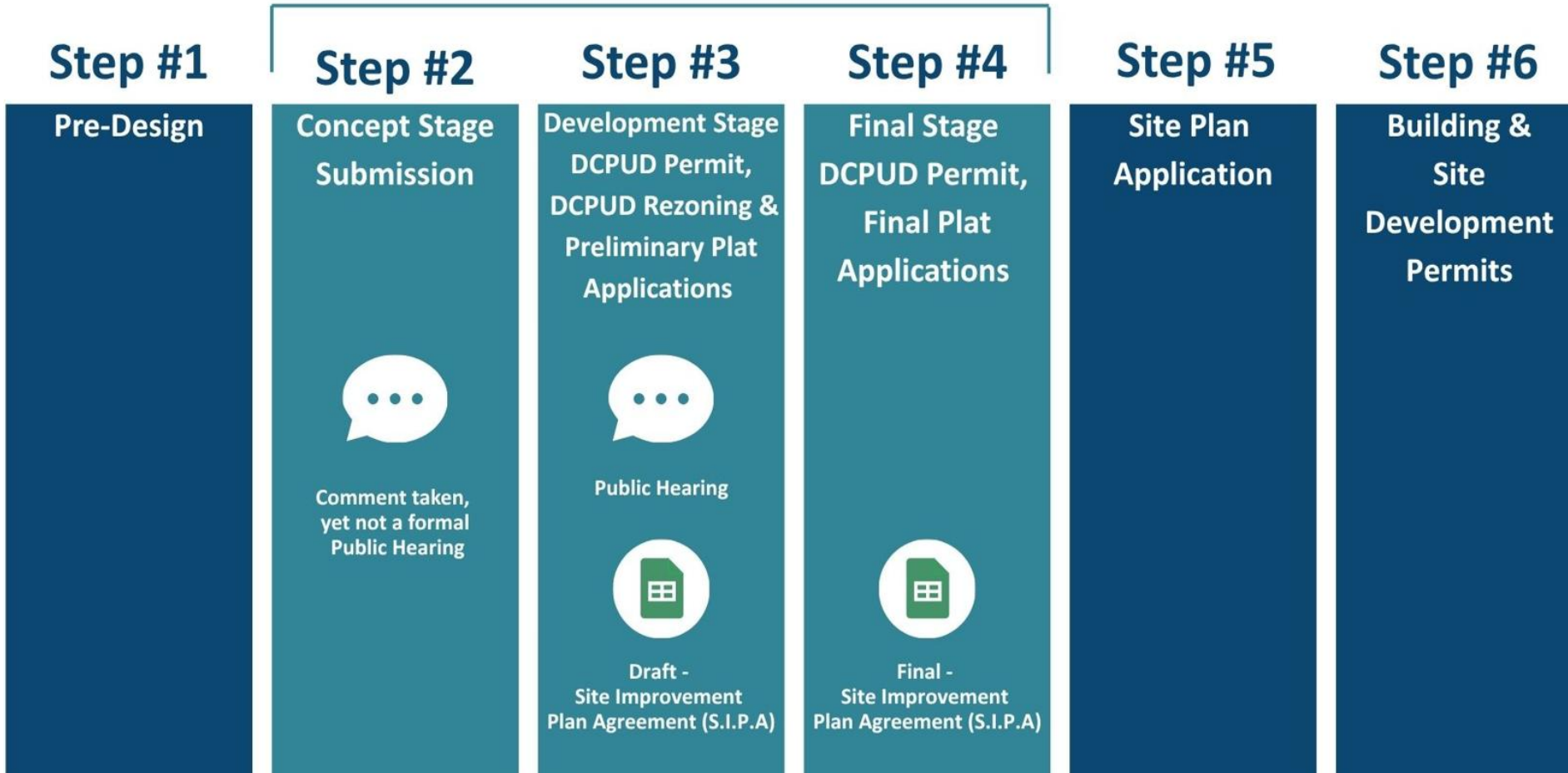
- Specific findings for rezoning related to electric power infrastructure and availability
- Specific standards for substations
- Statement, study, or permit provided by the electric utility provider which demonstrates adequate capacity for the DCPUD and any expected impact to local or regional power supply

Revisions

- Summary of the proposed routing plan and required electrical infrastructure improvements
 - Concept and development stage
- Statement of telecommunication provider(s) information detailing sufficient system improvements as to avoid any local service interruption during normal operations

Review Process

Board Review



Revisions:

- 60 days between Development Stage PUD/Preliminary Plat approval and Final Stage PUD/Final Plat submission **(add “complete”)**
 - One extension may be granted by the City Council for a maximum of an additional 6 months, applicant shall request waivers for statutory time limits as necessary
 - Applications which fail to meet this deadline shall be deemed void and shall require review
- Following DCPUD approval, the applicant is required to record the Final Plat within 365 days of the Council’s approval of Final Stage and Final Plat
 - One extension from this requirement may be granted by the Council
 - City Council may deny or modify the extension timeline at its sole discretion; no inherent right to extension

Revisions:

- Building permit for a principal structure within the first phase of development on site filed within 1 year of the filing of the Final Plat
 - Based on the date of recording of the final plat with the Wright County recorder
 - City Council may deny or modify the extension timeline at its sole discretion; no inherent right to extension
 - City Council may act after the 1 year period to revoke the DCPUD, revoke the governing Final Stage PUD approval, revoke the SIPA, and rezone the land to any other zoning district, following a public hearing to be held by the City Council

Other

Address other concerns raised during the public hearing related to data center development:

- Emissions
- Sustainability
- Community & Fiscal Benefits – Cost Burden
- Decommissioning
- Enforcement
- Ownership and Tenancy