



Planning and Economic Development

Sara Roediger, AICP, Director

From: Chris McLeod, AICP, Planning Manager
To: Planning Commission
Date: 4/15/2026
Re: Data Center Ordinance Discussion Draft

Enclosed is the initial discussion draft of a proposed data center ordinance for the City of Rochester Hills.

As you may be aware, recognizing the rapid evolution and unique infrastructure impacts of the data center industry, the City Council adopted a 180-day temporary moratorium on data center development at its regular meeting on March 9, 2026. This moratorium temporarily suspended the processing of applications to allow the City time to evaluate and draft appropriate regulatory standards.

During this period, the Planning and Economic Development Department has developed the enclosed draft ordinance to proactively manage these facilities. The proposed framework establishes a two-tiered approach based on the scale and impact of the use:

- **Primary/Large-Scale Facilities:** Data centers operating as a primary use, or those with a power capacity of 2 megawatts (MW) or greater (e.g., Hyperscale, Colocation, and Telecom centers), will require conditional use approval, a minimum 10-acre site, and will be restricted to the I-Industrial District.
- **Ancillary/Small-Scale Facilities:** Smaller data centers operating as an ancillary use to an existing business (e.g., Enterprise or Micro centers) with a capacity under 2 MW will be permitted by-right in both the I-Industrial and EC-Employment Center Districts, without the 10-acre minimum requirement.

In an effort to help protect the City's infrastructure, environment and overall quality of life, the draft introduces stringent regulations relating to noise emissions, water consumption, electrical grid impact, and requirements for acoustic modeling and visual screening. These requirements are applicable dependent on the size and type of the proposed facility.

This document is presented as a first draft to facilitate discussion and gather input from the Planning Commission. Following your feedback, staff will make the necessary refinements and bring the modified ordinance back for a formal public hearing and a subsequent recommendation to the City Council.

We look forward to your review and feedback. Please let us know if you have any immediate questions.