

ZTA 26-01 COMMERCIAL USES – DATA CENTER

Description

ZTA 26-01 creates a use and a definition for Data Center, and establishes conditional use standards for Data Centers in the Industrial Zones.

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ZTA SPONSORS

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INTRODUCTION DATE

January 20, 2026

COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING DATE

February 24, 2026

REVIEW BASIS

Chapter 59

Summary

This ZTA creates a new use and definition for
Data Center:

- Specifies that a Data Center is only allowed by conditional use in Industrial Zones
- Establishes additional standards to mitigate any potential negative impacts of a Data Center, including visual, environmental, and to community resources.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1 – BACKGROUND	2
SECTION 2 – ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	2
SECTION 3 – CLIMATE ASSESSMENT	13
SECTION 4 – CONCLUSION	14
SECTION 5 – ATTACHMENTS.....	14

SECTION 1 – BACKGROUND

Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) 26-01, Commercial Uses – Data Center was introduced on January 20, 2026, by Council President Fani-González, Vice President Balcombe, and Councilmember Sayles (Attachment A). The ZTA is scheduled for a Public Hearing on February 24, 2026.

The introduction of ZTA 26-01 included introductory remarks from the ZTA’s sponsors acknowledging that this ZTA is only a first step in a conversation to guide the development of Data Centers. The ZTA was developed based on best practices and Data Center reports produced by other jurisdictions in the region, incorporating their ideas into the ZTA. The conditional use process was selected due to the noticing, public hearings, and quasi-judicial review that is done at the Office of Zoning and Administrative Hearings (OZAH).

SECTION 2 – ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In Planning Staff’s typical analysis of a ZTA, we strive to provide a deep technical review and offer specific recommendations to amend the proposed language. However, with ZTA 26-01, Planning Staff are generally taking an approach of providing alternatives for the Board and the Council to consider as they weigh input from the various stakeholders around the Data Center discussion. This report is an analysis on the introduced ZTA, not a deep dive into the merits of Data Center development. Given the complexity and evolving nature of Data Center development, the diverse perspectives among stakeholders, and lack of robust regulatory history, Planning Staff believes that presenting a range of alternatives will better support informed decision-making by the Board and Council. Where the ZTA proposes recommendations directly related to our technical expertise, grounded in the zoning ordinance, development standards, and the technical review of development applications, Planning Staff does offer more concrete suggestions for amendments.

ZTA 26-01 introduces edits in multiple areas within Chapter 59, with the primary focus on the creation of a new use for Data Centers, including its definition and applicable use standards. The following sections will examine proposed changes to Chapter 59, focusing on the definition of Data Centers, applicable use standards, and other relevant amendments. For each area, we will assess the proposal and present alternative options for consideration.

DIVISION 1.4. DEFINED TERMS

The first section of the ZTA, lines 10-15, adds Data Center as a new defined term, by providing a section reference to the definition located within the use standards for Data Center in Section 3.5.2.B.1. The ZTA also updates section references for finding definitions for the terms Media Broadcast Tower, and Telecommunication Tower, as both of these uses have their code sections amended with the addition of Data Center to the Zoning Code.

Recommendation: Support the addition of Data Center and the section reference for its definition in the Defined Terms section.

Data Center – Defined

The definition for Data Center is located in Section 3.5.2.B.1. (lines 48-53), and is defined as:

Data Center means a building or group of buildings used to house computer or network systems, computer storage equipment, servers, and associated infrastructure to store, manage, process, and transmit digital data. Data Center does not include a Cable Communications System.

As a base definition for what a Data Center is, Planning Staff supports the definition. However, for reasons that arise throughout the analysis of this ZTA, we recommend considering creating sub-definitions for different types or sizes of Data Centers. The definition and use standards in ZTA 26-01 assume a one-size-fits-all approach to regulating Data Centers and seek to provide the best mitigation and protection possible based on best practices adopted by other area jurisdictions. Some of these development standards seem to have a certain type of Data Center in mind, which can be large and disruptive to residential land uses. However, not all uses that meet the definition proposed for Data Center are the same size. Planning Staff’s research found that the average Data Center facility is approximately 100,000 square feet, which, for reference, is about the size of a large grocery store. Many data centers are much smaller, including ones under 20,000 square feet (drug store size), which often serve one or a handful of local businesses, or serve as latency boosting facilities. Conversely, the largest can exceed 1 million square feet (regional shopping mall sized). These are being built for cloud storage and AI processing.¹ The visual, environmental, and infrastructure impacts are different depending on the size of the Data Center facility.

According to the website datacentermap.com, a self described directory of Data Centers intended to help buyers, sellers, and investors make sound market decisions, the Data Centers tracked tend to be those offering remote cloud storage for private use, or those that lease space for private ‘co-location’ space to be set up by other private industries. There are at least four² existing Data Centers in Montgomery County. There are likely other facilities in the county that meet the proposed definition of Data Center that are part of private businesses, research facilities, or institutional uses where ‘data services’ are part of the use definition. Attachment C includes some quick facts and pictures of the four identified Data Centers. In summary, all four of these Data Centers are located in close proximity to existing residential uses, and are located in CR or mixed use zones rather than industrial zones. Two of the four are utilizing a portion of an existing, multi-tenant office building, while the other two are the primary building use. The two independent Data Center facilities are also the two largest. One, on

¹ Information provided through a Google AI search, which was based on a [report](#) from the New York Tri-State areas Regional Plan Association, and a [write-up](#) IBM recently did on the rise of Hyperscale Data Centers.

² One location, at 1201 Seven Locks Road is in the City of Rockville.

Prosperity Drive in Silver Spring is on approximately 10 acres of land, in the CR zone, and is 214,000 square feet in size. The other, on Century Boulevard in Germantown, is on 14 acres of land, is approximately 114,000 square feet, and is also in the CR zone.

After considering online literature, the data from datacentermap.com, and the development standards proposed by ZTA 26-01, Planning Staff sees benefit in considering at least three size distinctions. A small-scale Data Center with minimal external impacts and that is small in size, such as under 20,000 or 25,000 square feet of building area, a medium-scale Data Center with moderate external impacts and buildings up to 150,000 or 200,000 square feet, and a large-scale Data Center with major external impacts for even larger building areas.

Another consideration is whether the definition of Data Center should specify it is used to house ‘off-site’ or ‘remote’ equipment for digital data, or clarify it does not include a facility that is accessory to a larger commercial operation. Planning Staff’s concern is that some businesses may have an on-site facility that otherwise may meet the definition of Data Center, but is only an accessory to the main business, located within a larger structure, and may be located in a non-industrial zone.

Recommendation: The code further define Data Center based on size, and apply appropriate standards discussed in other portions of the ZTA based on the size of Data Center proposed.

Recommendation: Planning Staff recommend the definition for Data Center clarify that it does not include any private, on-site, accessory ‘data center like’ uses associated with an individual commercial operation.

DIVISION 3.1. USE TABLE

The next section of ZTA 25-13, on line 25, is an update to the use table. The ZTA focuses on the Communications Facility portion of the use table and shows the insertion of Data Center between Cable Communications System, and Media Broadcast Tower. Within the table, Data Center is shown as only being allowed by conditional use (C) in the Industrial Zones (IL, IM, IH).

Recommendation: Support the addition to the Use Table.

SECTION 3.5.2 COMMUNICATION FACILITY MISC.

Most of the changes proposed by ZTA 26-01 occur within Section 3.5.2. Communication Facility. The largest change is the addition of Section 3.5.2.B. - Data Center. However, within this larger section of Communication Facility, there are additional minor technical updates not directly tied to the new Data Center Use. These include updating the definition of Cable Communications System to clarify that these do not include Data Centers (lines 44-45) and making numerous section reference updates within the Media Broadcast Tower and Telecommunications Tower sections, as both uses are moving to new subsections.

Recommendation: Support updates to the definition of Cable Communications System, and to the section references throughout the Division.

SECTION 3.5.2.B DATA CENTER

The majority of ZTA 26-01 is the introduction of new Section 3.5.2.B. Data Center, including a definition and use standards. The definition of Data Center, and Planning Staff's recommendations were discussed in an earlier section of this report. The analysis in this section begins with the Use Standards for Data Centers in Section 3.5.2.B.2. There are five sections of use standards included in the ZTA, discussed as follows.

Setbacks

The first use standard, under B.2.a (lines 58-62) requires that Data Centers located on a property abutting a Residential, Rural Residential, or Commercial/Residential zone extend each setback otherwise required for the structure and any accessory structures by 500 feet.

This requirement would create a separation between a Data Center and residential uses, which would help with any mitigation necessary, including some of the other development standards discussed further down in the use standards section. Planning Staff would like to highlight some key observations around this increased setback standard.

1. Size of the average Industrial Zoned property

Planning Staff's first observation is how this requirement would impact any industrial property that abuts one of the three groups of residential zones identified in the ZTA. Most of the industrially zoned properties in the County are smaller in size, comprised of one or a few small industrial buildings, located in old industrial business parks or along roadway corridors that were developed decades ago. Even in the aggregate, the industrial zoning blocks themselves are relatively small, and the County only has 3,211 acres of industrial zoning in total. Of that, 613 acres (19%) is on just two sites, the Dickerson facilities, and the Travilah quarry. The average industrial property is only 3.57 acres (including the two large sites), and the median size of an industrial property is even less, at 1 acre. This is in contrast to many surrounding jurisdictions, including Frederick and Prince George's counties in Maryland, which have multiple, more sprawling industrial campuses with large properties that already support larger industrial warehousing facilities.

An analysis of the industrially zoned properties found that 264 abut one of the identified residential zones (30% of the total). These abutting properties have a similarly small average (4.16 acres) and median (1.2 acres). Based on their size, few, if any, abutting properties have room to accommodate 500-foot setbacks for a Data Center.

2. Abutting, Confronting, or Near-by

Planning Staff's second observation is whether requiring additional setbacks for Data Centers that abut any of the three groups of residential zones is the best method for achieving compatible developments. In most instances in the Zoning Code where proximity between uses is a compatibility concern, the code requires both abutting and confronting properties to adhere to the different standards. ZTA 26-01, as introduced, only applies to abutting properties. The Zoning Ordinance defines confronting as:

properties that are directly across a right-of-way with a master plan width of less than 80 feet from each other based on a line between the 2 properties that is drawn perpendicular to the right-of-way. Properties within a 45-degree diagonal across an intersection are also confronting.

The definition of confronting doesn't apply to right-of-way planned for more than 80 feet of width because wider roads have historically been seen as enough of a barrier to no longer affect compatibility. It is worth considering whether Data Center sites that confront one of the identified residential zones should also apply additional setback standards, to achieve the same purpose as requiring the setbacks from abutting properties. Planning Staff identified 134 industrial properties that confront one of the identified residential zones. Combined with abutting (264 properties), that would bring the increased setback requirements to 398 (44%) of the County's industrial properties. However, as was expressed with abutting industrial properties, almost none of the confronting properties are large enough to accommodate a 500-foot setback and would result in little to no ability to build any Data Centers.

An alternative consideration to ensure separation between Data Center development and residential uses is to establish a flat distance that any Data Center must be kept from any residential zoned property, or alternatively from any residence, regardless of whether the industrial property abuts or confronts the residential zone. As discussed earlier, many of the industrially zoned properties in the County are small. It is possible that a site for a Data Center may not confront or abut a residential property but still be closer than 500 feet from a residential property. This would create unequal regulated distances that Data Centers would need to be from residential zones, based on irregular property configurations. Setting a minimum standard distance for all Data Centers from a residential zone would provide the most assurance of separation between Data Center uses and residential uses. Using the same 500-foot standard but applied as a setback from any residential zone, 703 out of 896 industrial properties are fully or totally impacted totaling 1,261 acres out of 3,211 acres (40%). Removing the two largest industrial sites, a 500-foot buffer impacts 48.5% of all industrial land in the County.

3. Size of the Data Center

The final consideration Planning Staff has regarding setbacks for Data Centers is a recommendation to consider the size of the Data Center and whether setbacks should be

proportional to Data Center size. As discussed earlier, Data Centers come in a wide range of sizes, and, as a result, have a wide range of impacts on the surrounding communities. A 500-foot setback may be necessary for the large-scale Data Centers but may not be as necessary for medium- or small-scale projects. As previous analysis has also noted, most of the industrial areas and properties in the County are small when compared to our neighboring jurisdictions. A 500-foot setback, either on-lot as introduced per the ZTA, or from a residential lot as was suggested above, would severely limit where Data Centers of any size could be located. Regardless of the chosen approach, Planning Staff does recommend considering a range of setbacks that are tied back to the size of the Data Center. A 500-foot setback is a good start for large-scale Data Centers, and scale the setbacks back for smaller-scale facilities with fewer sound and visual impacts.

Recommendation: Support enhanced setbacks between Data Center and residential uses but consider whether enhanced setbacks should also apply for confronting properties, whether the setbacks should be from lot lines as proposed or be from residential uses generally, and whether the size of the Data Center should be a consideration in the size of the setbacks required.

Impact Mitigation

The next set of use standards, under Section 3.5.2.B.2.b. (lines 63-81) contain five general provisions that Data Centers must demonstrate as part of a conditional use review that they minimize negative impacts to the maximum extent practicable. These include:

- i. visual impact to surrounding properties, roadways and historic sites,*
- ii. impacts to abutting non-industrial properties,*
- iii. impacts to wetlands, streams, rivers, flood plains, or environmentally sensitive areas,*
- iv. impacts to parks and recreation facilities*
- v. disproportionately affects overburdened communities or underserved communities as defined in section 1-701 of the Environmental Article of the Maryland Code.*

Planning staff understand the intent of the above-listed standards but have concerns with the regulatory uncertainty that comes with making findings proving that an applicant has met subjective requirements. The first four standards are stated more as overarching goals to achieve when applying the other use standards of this section under B.2.a requiring increased setbacks, c. requiring additional landscaping and screening, and d., which addresses noise. Existing forest conservation law requirements under Chapter 22A of the County Code provide protection to wetlands, streams, rivers, floodplains, and other environmentally sensitive areas through the identification of such features and placing various development buffers around them. It would be more useful to future applicants, plan

reviewers, and impacted community members to have more concrete standards of what is expected of a Data Center when the expectation is to exceed these existing countywide standards.

Regarding the fifth standard for protecting overburdened and underserved communities, the means to protect these identified communities are still vague, but the State Code does provide definitions of what these communities are.

An Overburdened Community means any census tract for which three or more of the following environmental health indicators are above the 75th percentile statewide; particulate matter (PM) 2.5, Ozone, National Air Toxics Assessment (NATA) diesel PM, NATA cancer risk, NATA respiratory hazard index, traffic proximity, lead paint indicator, National Priorities List Superfund site proximity, Risk Management Plan facility proximity, Hazardous waste proximity, Wastewater discharge indicator, proximity to a Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation, Percent of population lacking broadband coverage, asthma emergency room discharges, myocardial infraction discharges, low-birth weight infants, proximity to emitting power plants, proximity to a Toxic Release Inventory facility, proximity to a brownfield site, proximity to a mining operation, and proximity to a hazardous waste landfill.

The definition of an Underserved Community is more straightforward to measure and means *any census tract in which, according to the most recent US Census Bureau Survey; at least 25% of the residents qualify as low-income, at least 50% of the residents identify as nonwhite, or at least 15% of the residents have limited English proficiency.*

The Maryland Department of the Environment has created an [online interactive map](#) for the entire State to highlight the Overburdened and Underserved community census tracts. The only census tracts in Montgomery County that are not Overburdened or Underserved are the northernmost tract above Damascus, and one of the two tracts that comprise the Leisure World community just north of Aspen Hill. Much of the suburban central, and northern portion of the county is considered only Underserved, and only a very small area east of Bethesda is overburdened. The lower third of the County, the western portions of the Ag Reserve around Poolesville, and many of the urban areas in the center of the County are both overburdened and underserved.

Due to almost the entire county qualifying as one or both protected groups, Planning Staff questions whether this is the best criteria for evaluating impacts from an equity perspective. Planning Staff recommends instead utilizing one of our own developed tools, such as the [Community Equity Index](#) tool, which is calibrated to reflect the concerns and priorities of Montgomery County. Ensuring Data Centers are sited to protect the Disproportionate – Disadvantaged census tracts would be a more practical standard to achieve.

Recommendation: Consider whether development standards i. through iv. should be treated as standards requiring findings, or should be restated as goals of the Data Center standards.

Recommendation: Utilize an alternative metric for identifying overburdened or underserved communities such as Montgomery Planning’s Community Equity Index.

Landscaping, Lighting, and Buffers

Under Section 3.5.2.B.2.c. are standards for Landscaping, Lighting, and Buffers (lines 82 – 101). The ZTA would require Data Centers to follow the standards of Landscaping and Lighting in Division 6.4, and the screening in Division 6.5, plus follow an additional three standards. Planning Staff does not have any concerns with the proposed landscaping, lighting, and buffer standards but recommends some ways to further clarify the language.

- i. *Side and rear yards must include a landscaped buffer, including a four-season visual screen resulting in multi-layered, staggered rows of overstory and understory trees and shrubs that are a mix of evergreen and deciduous vegetation, with an emphasis on species that are native to Montgomery County.*

The standard screening requirement that would apply to Data Centers is found under Section 6.5.3.C.8. General Building with an Industrial Use. There are two options to select. Option A requires 30-50 feet of depth, a list of required plant material per 100 feet of screening, and a 6-foot-high wall or fence. Option B is similar to A, except it relies on a 6-foot-high berm that the landscaping is installed on rather than a wall or fence. The required planting materials are shown in Table 1 as follows.

Table 1 Screen Requirements

Dimensions (minimum)	Option A	Option B
Depth for IL, IM Zone	30 ft	30 ft
Depth for IH Zone	50 ft	50 ft
Canopy Trees per 100 ft	2	2
Understory or Evergreen Trees per 100 ft	4	3
Large Shrubs per 100 ft	14	11
Medium Shrubs per 100 ft	12	12
Small Shrubs per 100 ft	12	12
Wall, Fence, or Berm	6 ft wall or fence	6 ft berm

The Zoning Code section also includes an illustrative guide on how to lay out the plantings, as shown in Figure 1 below.

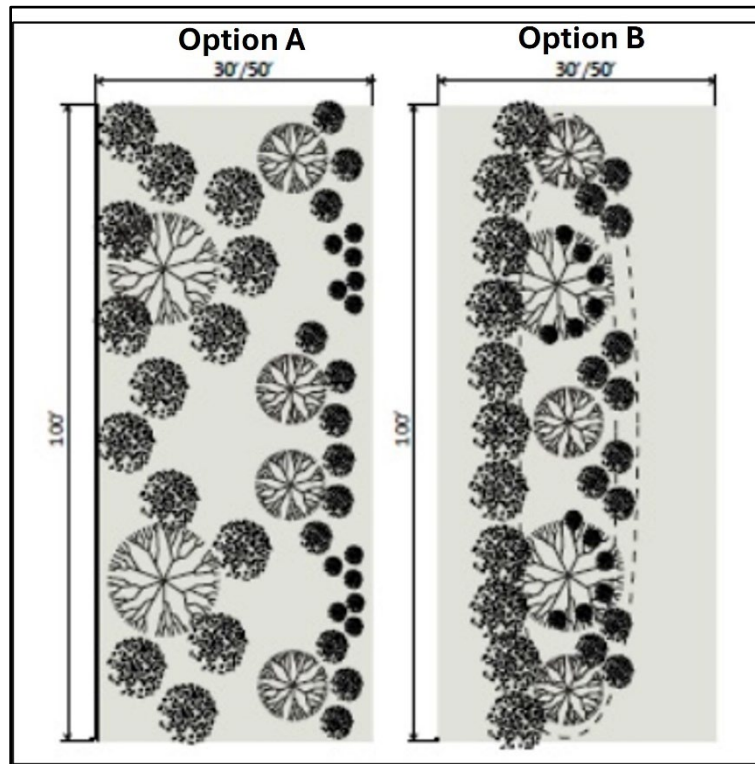


Figure 1 Screening Options

These existing requirements already require much of what the proposed use standards require. To make this use standard clearer, Planning Staff recommend building on the existing requirements outlined above, which already require a multi-layered, staggered screening of overstory and understory trees and shrubs, and focus on ways to strengthen it. This could include ensuring evergreen trees are used rather than understory trees, and ensuring some shrubs are also evergreen. The ZTA could also opt for the wider 50-foot requirement of the IH zone for all, or at least the larger-scale Data Centers.

~~Side and rear yards must include a~~ The required screening landscaped buffer shall meet the standards of the IH zone regardless of the underlying zone and, including a four-season visual screen resulting in multi-layered, staggered rows of overstory and understory trees and shrubs that are a must include a mix of evergreen and deciduous vegetation among all plant types, with an emphasis on species that are native to Montgomery County.

ii. *If security fencing is proposed, vegetative screening must be placed between the fence and the public view. Chain-link or similar woven metal or plastic fencing must not be used.*

Planning Staff notes that one of the required screening options includes a minimum 6-foot-high wall or fence. This provision could be updated to state that if a security fence is proposed, it should be integrated into the required landscape buffer.

If security fencing is proposed, ~~vegetative screening must be placed between the fence and the public view~~ it should be incorporated into the required landscape screening for screening under Section 6.5.3.C.8. option A. Chain-link or similar woven metal or plastic fencing must not be used.

iii. *Lighting must include elements that reduce negative impacts to wildlife migration, nocturnal habits, and circadian rhythms, such as the utilization of lights with amber or yellow tints instead of blue or white light and the use of timers, motion detectors, and light-sensitive switches to actively regulate the emission of light from light fixtures.*

Planning Staff has no concern with the intent of these standards but would recommend further clarity regarding certain elements, such as requiring lighting with a color temperature of 3000 kelvin or warmer, rather than referencing amber or yellow-tented lights. Planning Staff also recommends adding requirements for full cutoff light fixtures, whether free-standing or building-mounted, to both reduce light pollution and glare to adjacent properties.

Recommendation: Support the general landscape, lighting, and buffer requirements, with amendments tying the required buffers and fencing to existing buffer standards in the code, and being more descriptive where possible on the required lighting standards.

Noise

The standards found in Section 3.5.2.B.2.d. (lines 102-116) set specific noise standards for Data Center uses. The first of the three noise standards requires an application to provide sufficient analysis to make a finding of noise compatibility. The second standard requires a qualified engineer with experience in environmental acoustics to prepare the noise study. The third standard requires minimizing noise to the extent practicable and ensuring the use meets the noise requirements under Chapter 31B Noise Control.

The first standard, as written, is very open-ended and would require the reviewing entity to determine what type of analysis would be sufficient to make a finding of noise compatibility. The second and third standards, requiring the professional engineer to minimize noise to the extent practicable and at least to comply with the County Code, are reasonable and more objective standards to follow, and should provide the necessary leverage with the Hearing Examiner to ensure noise compatibility. Planning Staff recommends the text of d.i. remain, but be edited to read as an introductory clause rather than a required finding.

Planning Staff also recommend a minor revision to the wording for d.ii. as introduced. Planning already applies noise conditions to off-site noise impacted development applications, and it requires

noise studies be conducted by qualified engineers that specializes in, rather than with experience in, to environmental acoustics. Lastly, under the standards for d.iii.(b) the inclusion of “measured with a sound level meter” is a difficult finding to make, as it requires post construction confirmation. This is a good example of a condition of approval likely for Data Centers, but should be struck from the code requirement.

An example of the amended section layout would read as follows:

d. Noise Standards.

i. An application for a Data Center must provide a noise analysis sufficient to make a finding of noise compatibility subject to the following requirements.

ii. i. The analysis must be prepared by a qualified engineer ~~with experience that specializes~~ in environmental acoustics.

iii. ii. The analysis must assess the impact of all noise sources and determine the appropriate layout, design, and control measures to:

(a) minimize noise levels to the extent practicable; and

(b) ensure that noise created by the use, ~~measured with a sound level meter~~ from an adjacent property line, does not exceed the maximum dBA permitted under Chapter 31B {Noise Control} of the County Code, as amended.

Recommendation: Support the noise standards as amended to remove provision i. as a finding and instead make it a general requirement.

Generators

The last use standard proposed with ZTA 26-01 is under Section 3.5.2.B.2.e. (lines 117-119). It would require any necessary emergency generators to meet or exceed Tier 4 or equivalent emissions standards defined by the US Environmental Protection Agency. For reference Tier 4 generators became the standard required for most commercial generators starting in 2008 with a phase-in until 2015, and produce over 90% less Nox and Particulate Matter than Tier 1 generators which were standard starting in 1994. Emergency backup generators typical for uses such as Data Centers that are on standby except for cases of emergency are allowed to use older Tier 2 and Tier 3 standards. Requiring Tier 4 generators is an improvement above federal standards and Planning Staff support this requirement.

Recommendation: Support the requirement of Tier 4 generators.

Additional Recommendations

The Climate Assessment for ZTA 26-01 (Attachment B), summarized later in this report, made three recommendations to improve upon the climate outcomes that could become conditional use development standards. These recommendations are:

- Offsetting a portion of Data Center energy usage by requiring a minimum amount of on-site renewable energy generation or other measures that could result in the use of renewable energy.
- Consider heat mitigation standards for the built environment including the use of cool roofs, light colored pavement and surfaces, and shaded parking areas.
- Explore options for setting standards that would limit the use of potable water for cooling, and would generally reduce impacts identified to water quality and quantity.

These recommendations need further consideration before being turned into development standards but the intents are clear. Each of these recommendations could be an added development standard after B.2.e. which regulates generators, or B.2.e. could be rebranded as Environmental Standards, and generators could join the three above recommendations within an environmental section.

SECTION 3 – CLIMATE ASSESSMENT

Bill 3-22, passed by the County Council on July 12, 2022, requires the Planning Board to prepare a climate assessment for each Zoning Text Amendment, Master Plan, and Master Plan Amendment, effective March 1, 2023. Each Climate Assessment must include the potential positive or negative effects a ZTA may have on climate change (including greenhouse gas emissions) and on community resilience and adaptive capacity. The climate impact assessment for ZTA 26-01 is attached in Attachment B.

In summary, the Climate Assessment anticipates mostly indeterminate impacts related to greenhouse gas emissions except for emissions associated with electricity usage which could have major negative impacts. Impacts on carbon sequestration are also largely indeterminate, and impacts for community resilience and adaptive capacity are minor and both positive and negative. Planning Staff does anticipate larger negative impacts specifically to water quality and quantity within community resiliency. Overall the Climate Assessment does not anticipate a substantial number of new data center developments in the county, which will limit any impacts. ZTA 26-01 also would impact about a dozen implementation actions from the Climate Action Plan.

As part of Climate Assessment the Board may offer amendments or other mitigating measures that would help counter any negative impacts identified. Planning Staff identified three areas where additional standards should be considered to lessen the climate impacts of the ZTA:

- Offsetting a portion of Data Center energy usage by requiring a minimum amount of on-site renewable energy generation or other measures that could result in the use of renewable energy.
- Consider heat mitigation standards for the built environment including the use of cool roofs, light colored pavement and surfaces, and shaded parking areas.
- Explore options for setting standards that would limit the use of potable water for cooling, and would generally reduce impacts identified to water quality and quantity.

Recommendation: Support the Climate Assessment with the included recommendations to improve upon the ZTA and transmit to the District Council.

SECTION 4 – CONCLUSION

Planning Staff recommend that the Planning Board transmit comments on ZTA 26-01 for Data Centers. The Board generally supports the approach taken in the ZTA to define a new use, limit where it is allowed as a conditional use, and establish development standards that must be met. Planning Staff recommend the Board transmit the concerns and alternatives presented in this Staff Report to the District Council for their consideration as part of the larger discussion around Data Centers. Planning Staff also recommend the Board support and transmit the Climate Assessment for ZTA 26-01.

SECTION 5 – ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Zoning Text Amendment 26-01 Intro Packet

Attachment B: Climate Assessment for ZTA 26-01

Attachment C: Identified Data Centers by datacentermap