

What is a data center?

“A data center is a physical facility that houses IT infrastructure for building, running, and delivering applications and services, and for storing and managing the data associated with those applications and services.” – IBM

When the early internet exchanges were setup, Metropolitan Area Exchange, East (MAE-East), was created in 1994 in Ashburn. Early data centers grew around it even as the exchange was closed in 2009, replaced by Equinix Ashburn, and what is today called, “Data Center Alley.” Over a third of all internet traffic worldwide goes through Ashburn.



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

The Staff Report – Reviewing “By-Right” allowance

“‘By-right’ development means it is a permitted use in a zoning district and, as long as the planned development meets County/state standards, the County does not have the legal right to stop or restrict that property’s development.” – Fairfax County

The Fairfax County Department of Planning and Development released its report and guidelines for Data Center development in January 2024. Industrial zoned areas along I-95 may be targeted for development. The report is available on the County website at:

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/data-centers>

Coming soon to our area’s industrial zones?

Virginia is home to over 300 data centers with 75% located in Northern Virginia. After filling space in Loudoun County and areas to the west, they are moving East into Fairfax County. In the past year, the County has gone from 11 data centers either approved or operational to 17 centers. An Amazon Web Services data center is currently under construction on Loisdale Rd near the I-95 Newington exit.



The South County Federation Resolves . . .

- To direct the Special Exception review be required for all future data center applications, and
- That Special Exception review include:
 - Energy requirements, costs, and cost distribution,
 - Water quality impacts, including watershed and stream flows;
 - Air quality impacts, due to the use of diesel generators
 - Noise impacts, including when generators are in use.

What’s next? Timeline from the County’s Land Use Planning Committee

- **March 19th** – Board matter to direct County staff to begin crafting a new zoning amendment
 - <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/sites/planning-development/files/Assets/Documents/zoning/data-centers/3-19-2024-board-matter.pdf>
- **March to May** – Outreach and preparation of text
- **April 9th** – South County Federation vote on data center resolution
- **June** – Planning Commission committee meeting and public hearing
- **July** – Board of Supervisors public hearing

Join us for the next SCF meeting: Apr. 9th at 7 pm on Zoom