

**Study Review Committee  
Regular Meeting  
September 25, 2025**

**The meeting was called to order at 5:00pm.**

**Attendance:**

Voting Members: Katie Nasser, Bob Klingenfus, Greg King, and Tom Marsh

Staff: Planning Director Ryan Fischer and Senior Planner Anna Barge

Others present: Magistrate Hawkins

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion was made by Member Marsh and seconded by Member Nasser to approve the August 28, 2025, Meeting Summary.

**Motion carried by voice vote.**

**Data Center Regulations:**

Director Fischer provided three documents to the Study Review Committee:

1. Data Center Regulations with the last updates made by the Study Review Committee.
2. Redlined copy of Data Center Regulations with changes made by Task Force.
3. Clean copy with changes made by Task Force.

**Decommissioning**

Director Fischer started by reviewing the changes made to the Decommissioning section. Member Marsh asked if there are any other areas in our Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance that require Decommissioning. Director Fischer stated that only Cell Towers have Decommissioning requirements. He also explained that the Task Force stated that Data Centers will likely sell their property or reduce usage rather than cease operations, which is why the Task Force recommended the removal of the Decommissioning section. **The Members agreed with removing the Decommissioning section of the Zoning Ordinance.**

**Purpose and Intent**

Director Fischer stated that the Task Force recommended removing number 3, “Promote renewable energy and green infrastructure” because the overall regulations do not promote green infrastructure.

Director Fischer stated that the Task Force recommended removing number 5, “Provide for proper decommissioning and site reclamation to restore land to a usable, nonhazardous

condition.” They recommended removal of this number because the entire decommissioning section is being removed. **The Members agreed with the removal of these two items.**

#### Definitions

Director Fischer stated that the Task Force recommended removal of “Cessation of Operations” and “Decommissioning” definitions since they are both related to the removed section about Decommissioning. **The Members agreed with the removal of these two items.**

#### Zoning Districts and Location Restrictions

Director Fischer stated that the Task Force recommended adding the phrase “or the cumulative square footage” because if there are several small buildings, all of their square footage should be considered in the size classification.

Director Fischer stated that the Task Force recommended adding “/denial”. There was discussion on whether this was necessary.

**The Members agreed with the addition of these two items.**

For the Data Classification Chart, Director Fischer stated the sizes changed to:

- a. Small: less than 20,000 square feet
- b. Medium: greater than 20,000 square feet
- c. Large/Hyperscale: greater than 100,000 square feet

For the Power Capacity, the dates were updated to:

- a. Small: less than or equal to 5 MW
- b. Medium: greater than 5 MV
- c. Large/Hyperscale: Greater than 50MW

Additionally, the following note was added to the chart: The greater capacity will always take precedence. Director Fischer stated this allows flexibility if technology changes that either size or capacity is reduced/intensified.

**The Members agreed with the addition/update of these items.**

#### Building Requirements and Setbacks

Director Fischer stated the word “residential” was added so that if a project was placed adjoining to a residentially zoned or used property, the project would have to follow the 1000 feet setbacks.

There was discussion that no other regulation requires this large of a setback adjacent to residential zoning and use. Director Fischer stated that the intent is that no matter where you live, whether residential or other zoning, you should have the same setbacks. He recommended keeping this in the regulations until there is a public hearing so that feedback can be received from the public on this item.

Member Klingenfus expressed concerns about projects being able to find a lot that is large enough and still able to meet the 1000-foot setback. He also expressed concerns about the height allowances. Director Fischer stated that it follows the current height allowances for those zoning districts

Chair King suggested having the Task Force review the setbacks again and bring the information and feedback to the Planning Commission.

Director Fischer stated that the Task Force did not recommend adding the 1000-foot setback to schools because the schools are either residentially zoned, or located where a data center project could not come to.

**The Members agreed with the addition/update of these items and to have the Task Force review the setbacks and bring information to Planning Commission.**

#### *Building Aesthetics and Appearance*

Director Fischer stated that the Task Force added “and non-obtrusive” and “Earthtones are encouraged” to the description of what the building should look like.

**The Members agreed with the addition/update of these items.**

#### *Location, Screening, and Sound Attenuation*

Director Fischer stated that the Task Force removed the term “mechanical equipment” from this entire section because that allows more flexibility in the regulation. In some places, the word “mechanical” was replaced with “data center”. On number 8, the term “unit” was replaced with equipment.

Member Klingenfus stated concerns about this section being too arbitrary.

**The Members agreed with the addition/update of these items.**

#### *Generator Regulations and Testing Requirements*

Director Fischer stated that the Task Force made the following changes:

Number 1: add “natural gas”, remove “using graphene”, remove “natural gas turbines for primary power generation are prohibited”.

Number 4: new number added/new item: All turbines are prohibited

Number 6: Generator testing updated to: hours of 12PM to 5PM, Monday through Friday.

Member Marsh asked if the turbines are the equipment that Director Fischer stated were very loud on a site visit. Director Fischer stated yes.

**The Members agreed with the addition/update of these items.**

#### Cooling Requirements

Director Fischer stated the Task Force made the following changes:

Number 3: (if required) was added

Number 4: The entire section was reworded to “If a Thermal Energy District (waste heat recapture) is created and functional, participation is required for any new data center.”

Chair King asked who will monitor/staff the Thermal Energy District. Director Fischer stated that will be determined when/if the district is created.

**The Members agreed with the addition/update of these items.**

#### Landscaping, Lighting, and Fencing Requirements

Director Fischer stated that the Task Force made changes to the Fencing section, removing the requirement that the entire perimeter of the property be fenced. They also removed the examples of what is not allowed.

Member Marsh asked for explanation of why we would not require the entire property to be fenced. Director Fischer stated that a lot of properties will be large so the user purpose to fence just around the buildings.

**The Members agreed with the addition/update of these items.**

#### Security

Director Fischer stated that the Task Force made changes to the Security section, removing “or drone security” and adding “and public right-of-way”.

**The Members agreed with the addition/update of these items.**

#### Required Impact Studies

Director Fischer stated that the Task Force made changes to the Noise section, adding the following:

Section e: adding “and should be taken at various times of the day and night”.

Adding section f: Any noise analysis greater than 55 dB (A) at the property line shall have an abatement plan to mitigate any additional increase in noise.

Director Fischer stated that Loudon County recommended adding the regulation regarding 55 db.

**The Members agreed with the addition/update of these items.**

*Notifications*

Director Fischer stated that the Task Force added the word “neighborhood” to number 4.

**The Members agreed with the addition/update of these items.**

**Next Steps:**

The Members agreed to asking the Task Force to review the setbacks and come to Planning Commission with justification of those setback requirements.

**Motion was made by Member Nasser and seconded by Member Marsh to move the Data Center Ordinances to Planning Commission with the agreed changes.**

**Motion carried by voice vote.**

**Announcement:**

Director Fischer stated that the Comprehensive Plan will be considered by Planning Commission at a Special Planning Commission hearing on October 9, 2025 at 9am.

Director Fischer stated that the Data Center Ordinances will be considered by the Planning Commission at the Regular Planning Commission hearing on October 28, 2025 at 9am.

**Meeting was adjourned at 5:41pm.**