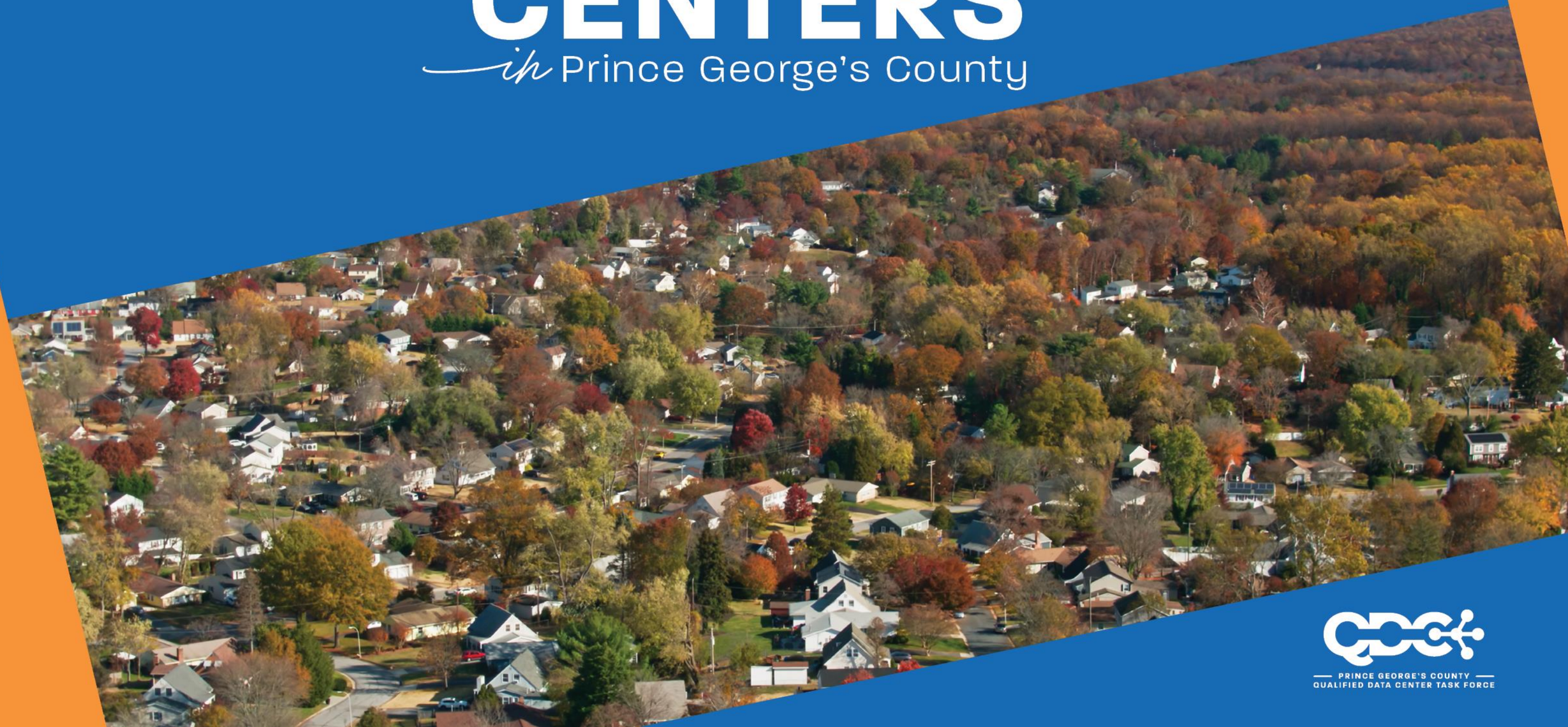
QUALIFIED DATA CENTERS

in Prince George's County



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY
QUALIFIED DATA CENTER TASK FORCE

PROJECT MISSION & GOALS

In accordance with CR-016-2025, the Prince George's Qualified Data Centers Task Force and M-NCPPC Prince George's County Planning Department, in collaboration with Gensler, a global architecture, design, and planning firm, led a focused effort aimed at helping shape future data center development policy in Prince George's County.

The project sought to:

1. **Understand current public perceptions of data centers.**
2. **Identify key community concerns to address, such as increased energy demand, environmental impacts, and quality-of-life matters.**
3. **Highlight the types of economic opportunities attributed to regional growth in data center development.**

REPORT TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section 1

Introduction & Executive Summary

Why now?

- Data centers are under scrutiny for land use, environmental impact, and energy strain.
- Research on environmental effects is limited and often unreliable.
- Communities question if economic benefits outweigh social and environmental costs.
- This report proposes zoning and land use policies that balance industry growth with community needs.

Section 2

Task Force Overview

Qualified Data Center Task Force

Overview

The Qualified Data Center Task Force was established under CR-016-2025 to address the impact of data centers on local energy demands and potential impacts to County residents in meeting future energy demand; environmental impact, recommended measures to mitigate negative impacts; and impact on quality of life.

James Hunt, Acting Director of the Prince George's County Planning Department, briefs the Qualified Data Center Task Force on June 11, 2025.

Task Force Members

Representative	Title	Organization
Edward Burroughs III	Chair of the County Council / Task Force Co-Chair	Prince George's County Council
Anthony Jones, Esq.	County Attorney / Task Force Co-Chair	Prince George's County
Wala Blegay, Esq.	Representative, Office of the County Executive	Prince George's County Council
Mary Giles	Deputy Director	Prince George's County Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement
Monica Marquina	Director, Government Affairs	Washington Sanitary Service Commission (WSSC Water)
Alexis Lewis	Representative	Maryland Office of the People's Counsel
Griffin Benton	Vice President, Government Affairs	Maryland Building Industry Association (MBIA)
Darryl Barnes	President & CEO	Bi-County Business Roundtable
Mark Scarano	Representative	Exelon
Thomas Dennison	Representative	SMECO
Martin Ezemma	Representative	Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation
Staci Hartwell	Representative	South County Environmental Justice Coalition
Tom Natelli	President & CEO	Natelli Communities
Michael Stellino	Senior Managing Director, Development	Elion
Dr. David Tilley	Associate Professor of Environmental Science & Technology	University of Maryland College Park
Brad Frome	Workforce Development Representative	RISE Investment Partners
Victoria Leonard	Labor Representative	LIUNA
Don Slaiman	Labor Representative	IBEW Local 26
Crystal Carpenter	Representative	Ardmore Springdale Civic Association

TASKFORCE MEETING SUMMARIES

May 14

- The Task Force convened its first meeting to outline its mandate under CR-16-2025.
- County Executive Aisha Braveboy presented her vision for the County.

June 11

- Presentation: Data Center Overview—James Hunt
- Discussion: Planning for July Community Meetings
- Guest Speakers:
  - **Ben Mann**
    Vice President,
    Cushman & Wakefield – Economic Development
  - **Andrew Mason**
    Labor Superintendent,
    Power Solutions, LLC – Labor

July 9

- Loudoun Co. Data Center Tour recap
- Discussion: July Community Meetings
- Guest Speakers:
  - **Patrick Murray**
    "Frederick County's Data Center Experience"
  - **WSSC Water Representative**
    "Environmental Impacts on Water"
  - **Exelon Representative**
    "Environmental Impacts on Energy"

September 10

- Presentation: Data Center Materials Overview—James Hunt
- Presentation: Community Meetings Recap—Gensler
- Guest Speaker:
  - **Marc Scarano**
    "Environmental Impacts on Energy"
- Other Topics: Tour of Frederick County Data Center Site and Discussion

October 8

- Recap of Data Center Tour — Frederick County
- Upcoming Data Center Community Meeting October 25, 2025
- Guest Speakers:
  - **David McGettigan, Sr. AICP**
    Deputy Planning Director,
    Prince William County
  - **Jason Stanek**
    Executive Director,
    Governmental Services, PJM

October 29

- Recap of Data Center Community Meeting October 25, 2025
- Guest Speaker:
  - **William F. Fields**
    Deputy People's Council, Office of the People's Counsel

November 12

- Review and discussion of Data Center Community Meeting held on October 25
- Review and discussion of comments received from Task Force Members—James Hunt
- Vote on the culmination of the Task Force and the submission of the report to County Council

Section 3

Community Engagement Summary

MEETING DETAILS & ATTENDANCE

Four Community Engagement Meetings

NORTH COUNTY

Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation Headquarters
July 17, 2025
6:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m.
37 attendees

SOUTH COUNTY

Southern Regional Technology & Recreation Complex
July 26, 2025
10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
44 attendees

CENTRAL COUNTY

Prince George's Sports & Learning Complex
July 24, 2025
6:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m.
69 attendees

OCTOBER MEETING*

Prince George's Sports & Learning Complex
October 25, 2025
10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
465 attendees

Analysis of the October meeting is provided in the appendix of the report.

MEETING AGENDA

Each meeting included registration, interactive welcome posters, an overview presentation, and three rounds of facilitated roundtable discussions.

15 min	Registration & Poster Review
35 min	Welcome Message & Data Center Overview Presentation
20 min	Round Table One
20 min	Round Table Two
20min	Round Table Three
10 min	Closing & Next Steps

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS APPROACH

A facilitator from Gensler or M-NCPPC led each table and focused on one of the three key themes below.

Participants rotated through the tables, spending about 20 minutes at each so everyone could contribute to all discussion areas.

Community members attend a data centers public meeting at the Southern Regional Technology and Recreation Complex in July, 2025.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION THEMES

COMMON CONCERNS AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES DISCUSSION

- Environmental impact
- Noise
- Energy use
- Water consumption
- Potential public costs

COMMUNITY BENEFITS STRATEGIES DISCUSSION

- How data centers could add value to the community
- Workforce development
- Tax revenue
- Partnerships with local organizations
- Infrastructure investment

SITE CONSIDERATIONS AND BUILDING DESIGN DISCUSSION

- Site access and location
- Architectural design and screening
- Sustainability strategies to improve environmental performance

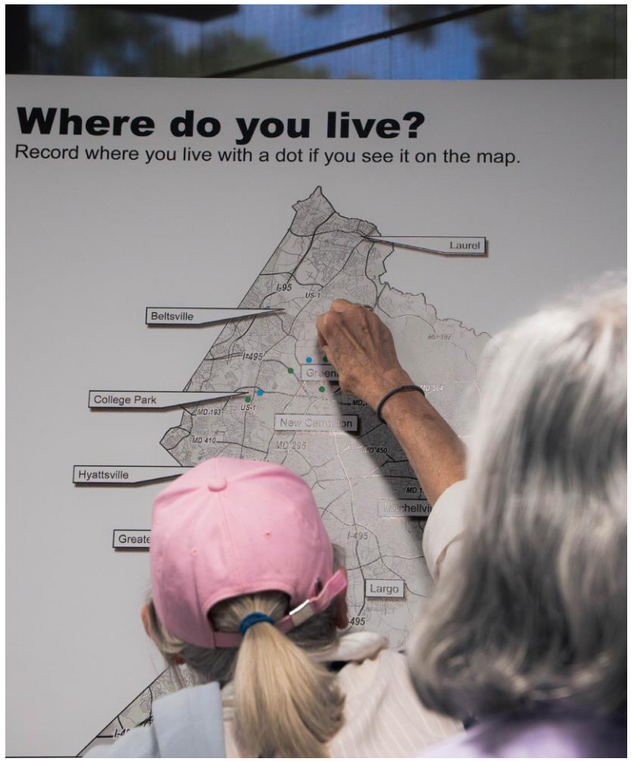
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ANALYSIS

DATA COLLECTION

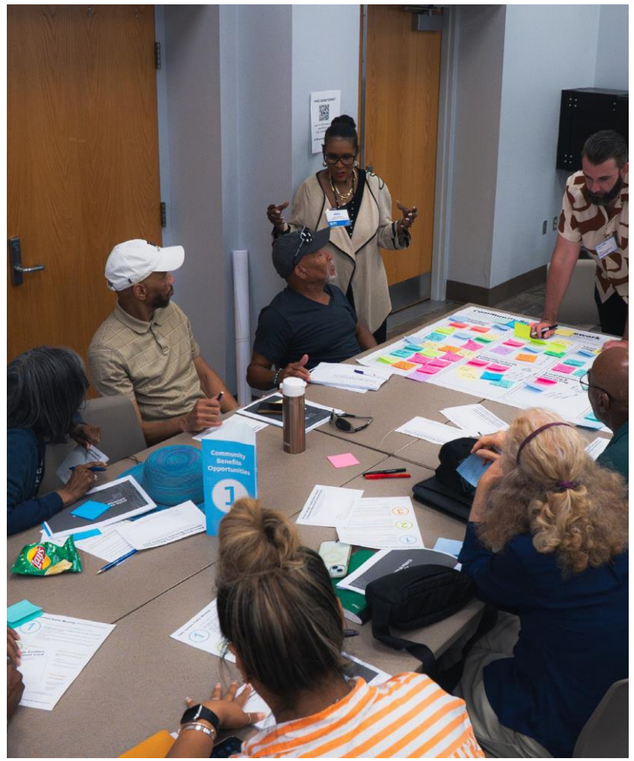
- Comments written on sticky notes and posters during meetings
- Additional feedback sent by email after meetings

DIGITIZATION AND ANALYSIS

- All comments scanned and transcribed
- Organized into an Excel spreadsheet by topic
- Quantified responses to highlight top community concerns



Community members at PRA Auditorium engage interactive poster activities during a July, 2025 data centers public meeting.



Participants at a Qualified Data Center community meeting at Prince George's Sports and Learning Complex engage at a discussion table.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DISCUSSION RESULTS

2,595 responses across four meetings

SIX KEY COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

1. **Environmental Impact**
   Residents made clear that environmental impacts were their top concern.

2. **Governance and Planning**
   Many participants do not want any data centers in the count. Others want to be included in the planning process and to be able to trust County leadership.

3. **Economic Value**
   Many questioned local economic benefits and stressed the need for lasting jobs without new financial burdens on residents.

4. **Design and Aesthetics**
   Participants emphasized the importance of buffers for noise control and attractive, community-oriented design.

5. **Zoning Clarity and Protections**
   Residents want clear rules and meaningful safeguards to protect neighborhoods and community assets.

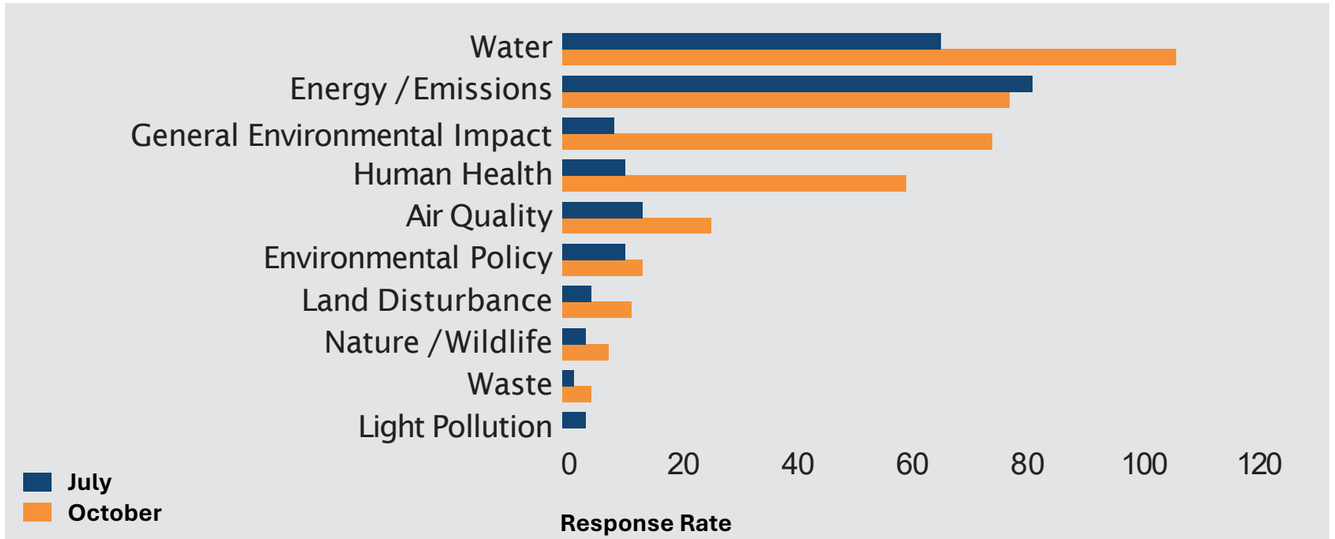
6. **Community Reinvestment**
   Residents urged investments in schools, libraries, parks, and other community infrastructure.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DISCUSSION RESULTS

Environmental Impact

593 responses

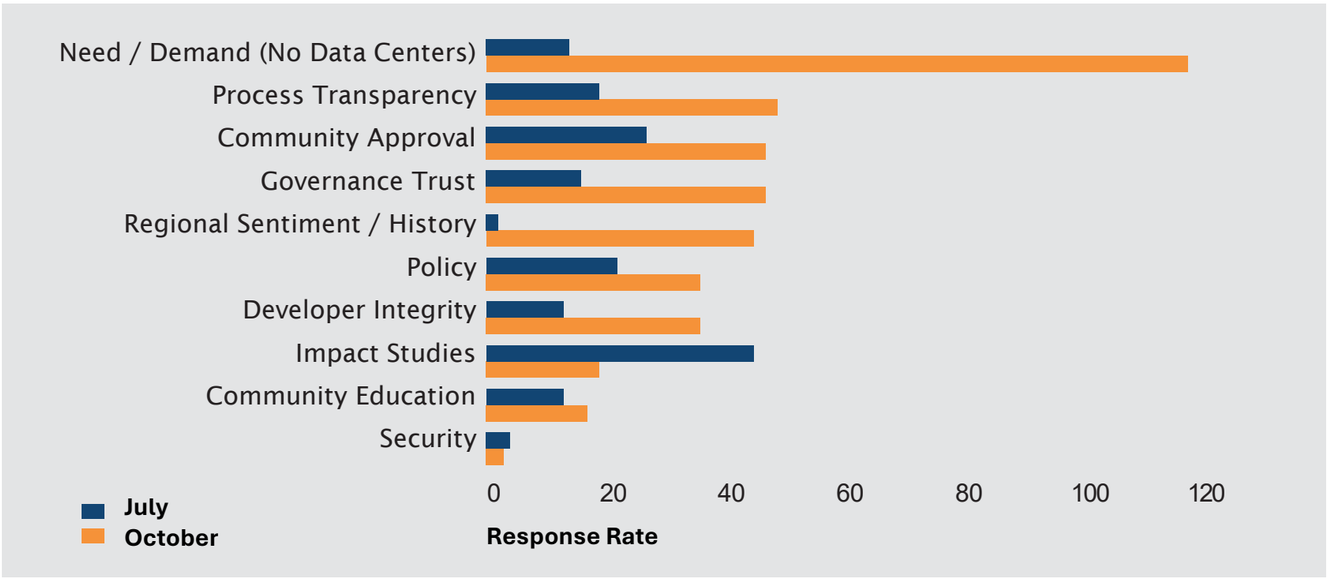
- Water use, quality, and discharge were the biggest concerns in October.
- Earlier meetings focused more on energy use and emissions.



Governance and Transparency

592 responses

- There is growing skepticism about data centers in the County.
- October responses showed more outright opposition and demand for fair, inclusive planning.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DISCUSSION RESULTS

Economic and Financial Impact

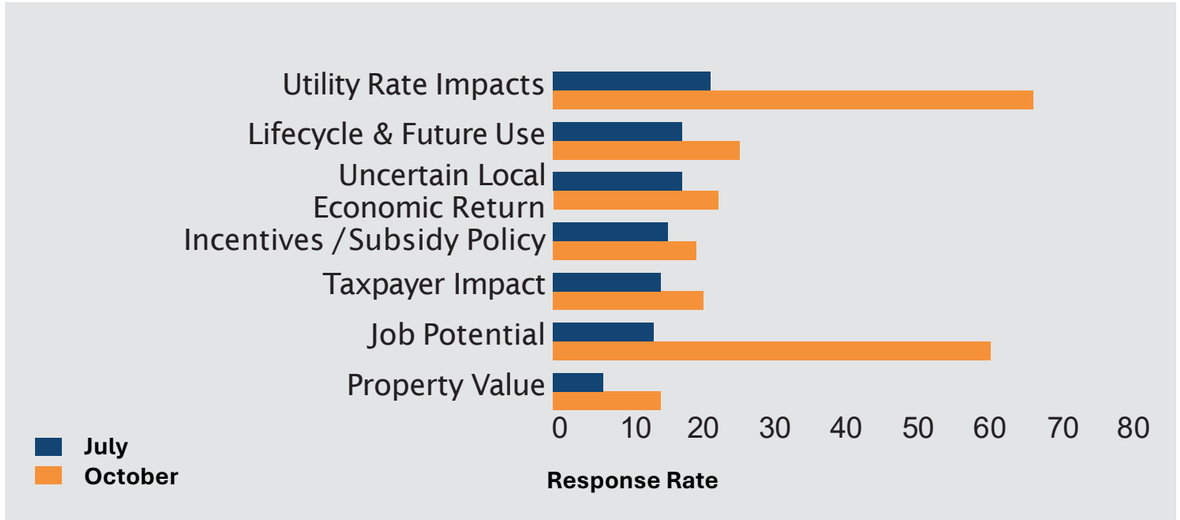
343 responses

- Biggest concern: higher utility rates
- October meetings focused more on job creation and economic trade-offs

Jobs and Local Workforce

87 responses

- Strong call for local job opportunities
- Ensure positions stay in Prince George's County



Zoning

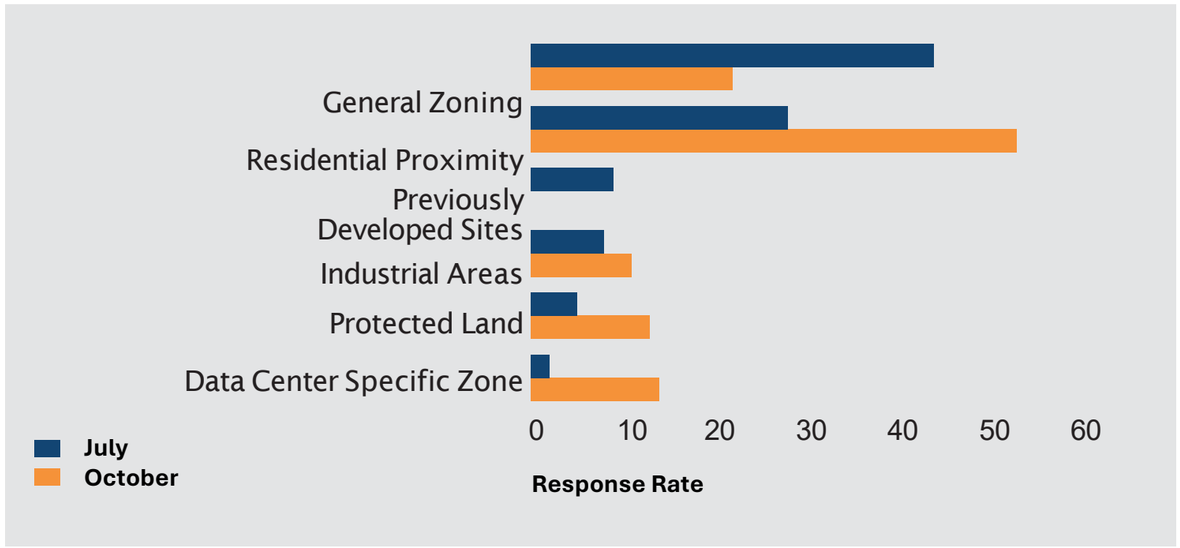
229 responses

- Concern about data centers near homes
- Need stronger protections and clear rules

Site Considerations

175 responses

- Many questioned if data centers should be built at all
- Suggested alternative uses like community-serving developments



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DISCUSSION RESULTS

Design and Aesthetics

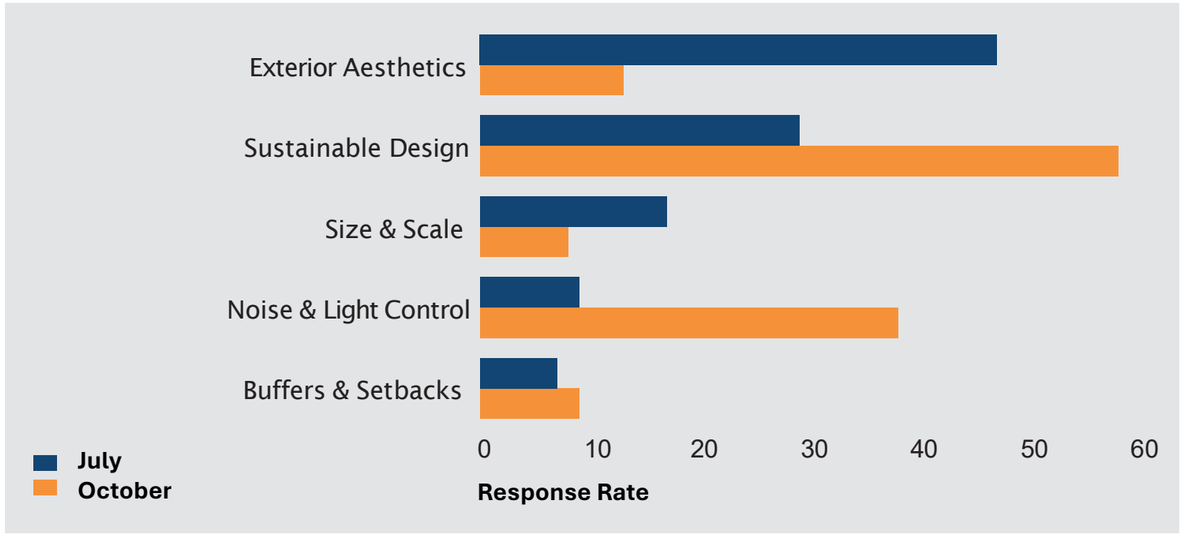
235 responses

- Shift from looks to sustainability
- Noise and light control are top priorities

Noise and Disruption

77 responses

- Concern over 24/7 operations affecting quality of life
- Traffic and infrastructure strain highlighted



Community Reinvestment

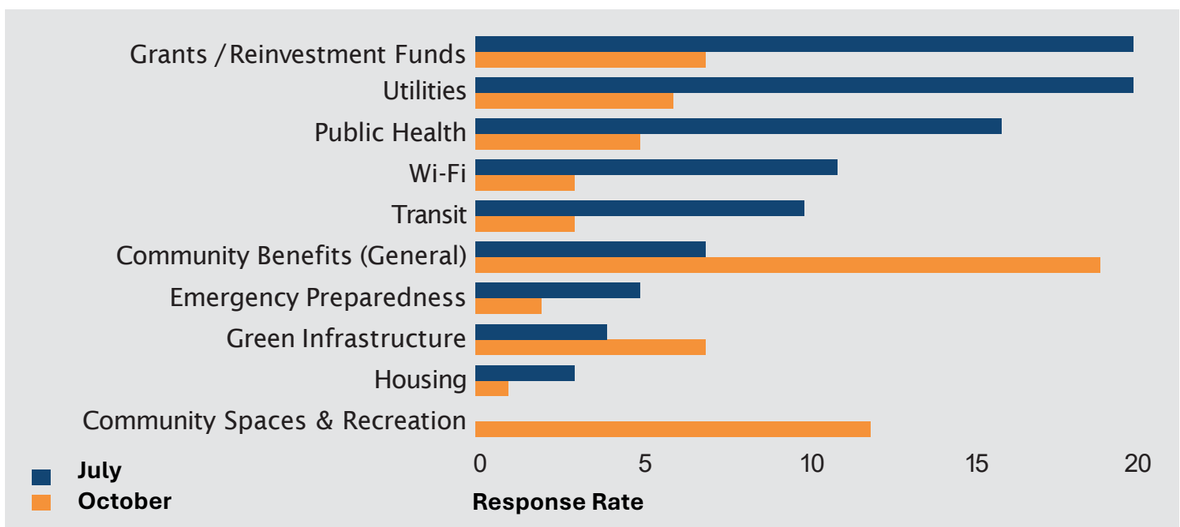
161 responses

- Desire for funding parks, utilities, and green spaces
- Support for reinvestment in public infrastructure

Education

103 responses

- Calls for investments in education, including technical training and support for schools and libraries



Section 4

Case Study Comparison

CURRENT REGULATIONS IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

In Place Now

Prince George's County already has strong data center regulations aligned with best practices.

The goal is not to rewrite the zoning ordinance but to fix gaps and address community concerns.

Temporary Moratorium on New Data Center Development

In September 2025, Prince George's County instituted a temporary moratorium on new data center development in the county. The County Executive and County Council halted the review, approval, and permitting of new data centers to allow time for the Qualified Data Center Task Force to complete a comprehensive evaluation of land use, environmental impacts, infrastructure demands, and community concerns.

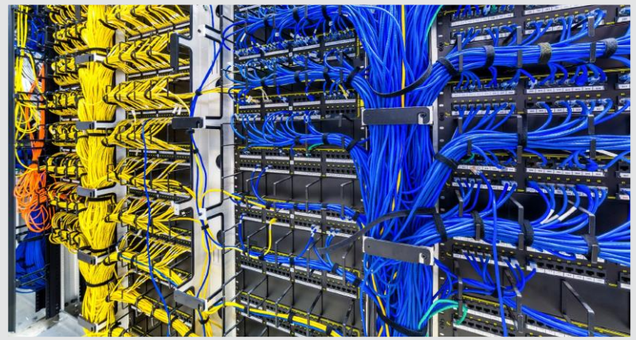
Reviewing how other jurisdictions regulate data centers can inform recommendations for the future of Prince George's County.

PERMITTED BY RIGHT

As of the publication of this report, qualified data centers are permitted by right in the following zones:

- RR (Residential, Rural) *see table 27-5101(c)*
- AG (Agriculture and Preservation) *see table 27-5101(c)*
- CGO (Commercial, General, and Office) *see table 27-5101(d)*
- IE (Industrial, Employment) *see table 27-5101(d)*
- IH (Industrial, Heavy) *see table 27-5101(d)*
- NAC (Neighborhood Activity Center) *see table 27-5101(d)*
- TAC– C (Town Activity Center– Core) *see table 27-5101(d)*
- TAC– E (Town Activity Center– Edge) *see table 27-5101(d)*
- TAC– PD (Town Activity Center– Planned Development) *see table 27-5101(e)*
- IE– PD (Industrial, Employment– Planned Development) *see table 27-5101(e)*
- And all CBCAO, APAO, and MIO Zones [(Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Overlay, Aviation Policy Area Overlay, and Military Installation Overlay Zones) only if allowed in the underlying base zone] *see table 27-5101(f)*

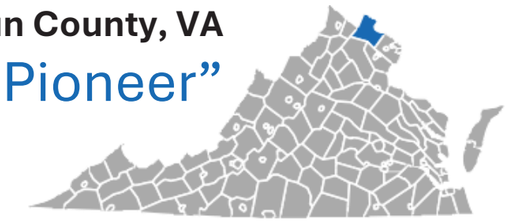
FIVE JURISDICTIONS



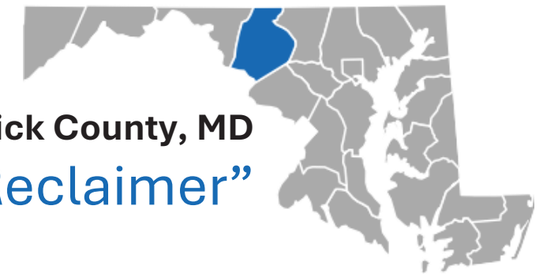
These five jurisdictions were chosen because of their perceived experience and based on best planning practices in forming future data center development policies.

Each case study is characterized based on its own historic context and potential contributions to how their policies may inform and influence the future policies adopted by Prince George's County.

Loudoun County, VA
"The Pioneer"



Franklin County/
New Albany, OH
"The Dealmaker"



Frederick County, MD
"The Reclaimer"

Fairfax County, VA
"The Scout"

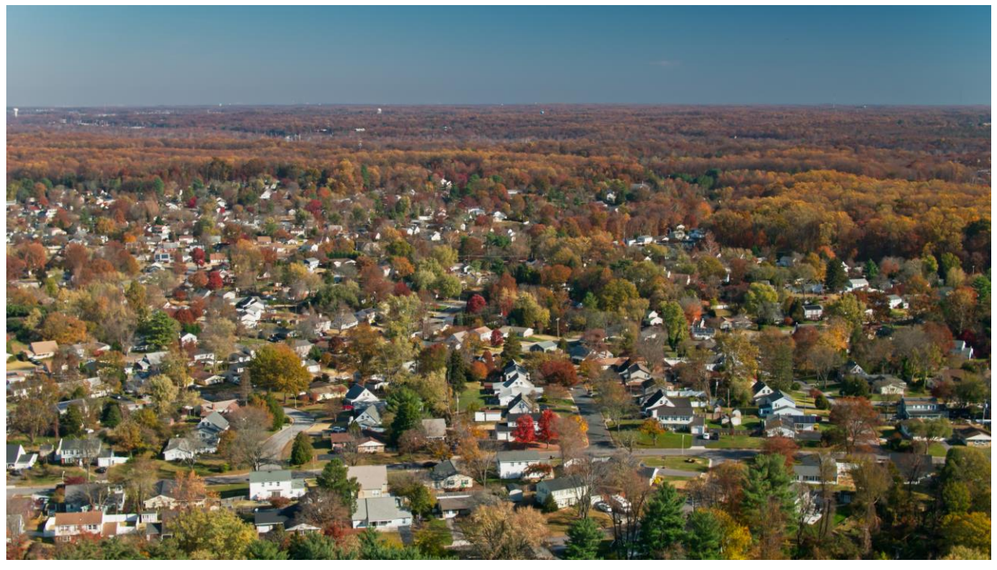
Fulton County/
Greater Atlanta, GA
"The Revolutionary"

CASE STUDIES COMPARISON

County	Status of Policy Updates	Project Application Review Process	Unique Zoning and Siting Considerations	Community Benefits Overview
Loudoun	The Board initiated research effort in Feb. 2024. Phase 1 Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance Amendments were approved in March 2025. Phase 2 remains ongoing.	Data centers are allowed only through a special exception use in certain office and industrial zones. Specific conditions of approval may be set to mitigate adverse impacts.	Current ordinance under review for amendment; however, existing façade and site design standards serve as a good policy model for intentional but flexible guidelines that address common noise and aesthetic concerns.	Annual real property tax revenues in excess of $100 million, resulting in a 30% decrease in real property tax rate for residential base over the past decade; other educational and workforce development program partnerships through the Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) system.
Frederick	Workgroup formed in June, 2023 and final report issued in March 2024. Revised Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Map Amendments, and Draft Overlay Zone Map all in progress.	Conditional use permits are required in addition to various impact studies. Ongoing noise and vibration studies are periodically required once in operation.	Overlay zone effectively limits the potential footprint of data center growth within the county. Prioritizes brownfield redevelopment and preservation of future agricultural lands.	Report recommends required CBAs for all projects. CBAs could help advance agriculture land conservation programs and other community priorities.
Fulton	Local municipalities recently approved new zoning ordinance amendments (South Fulton in Sept. 2024 and Atlanta in Sept. 2024 and June 2025).	Special use permits are required for all projects and developers must disclose plans for energy and water use, stormwater management, tree impacts, and utility infrastructure needs.	Data centers are prohibited within one-half mile of high-capacity transit stations, the Beltline, and identified community commercial corridors.	The Microsoft Data Academy training lab at Atlanta Technical College provides educational and workforce development opportunities and a variety of scholarship funds.
Franklin	General policy guided by 2020 strategic plan, amended 2022. No other policies currently in development.	By-right as an office use; administrative process only with expedited site plan review and permitting.	Designated Business Park within Town Employment Center District incentivizes developers to leverage existing infrastructure.	Numerous educational and workforce training programs; revolving community funds.
Fairfax	Research report was initiated in May 2023 with final findings issued in Jan. 2024. The revised ordinance was later adopted in Sept. 2024.	Several industrial zones allow by-right use, but policy incentivizes developers to pursue special exception. Two sound studies must be completed: one during application and another after construction for the occupancy permit.	Rezoning to a by-right district for data center development triggers similar application documentation (e.g., noise studies and architectural drawing package) as a special exception would require.	Educational programs and workforce training opportunities in technology and AI through apprenticeships and internships for students in NOVA system.

Section 5

Policy Recommendations



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Six Guiding Principles

From case studies and extensive community input, six guiding principles emerged.

These principles provide the framework for policy recommendations designed to balance growth with community wellbeing, environmental sustainability, and economic opportunity. A detailed description of each recommendation may be found in Section 5 of the report: Policy Recommendations.

Promote compatible and sensitive land use

Protect the environment

Maintain community character

Ensure a transparent and inclusive process

Maximize local economic benefits

Invest in local social infrastructure

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Promote compatible and sensitive land use

Recommendations

1. Tighten Data Centers Use Restrictions in Non-Industrial Zones
2. Protect Environmentally Sensitive Areas by Restricting Data Center Development
3. Establish an Overlay Zone that Incentivizes Brownfield and other Underperforming Sites for Data Center Development

Protect the environment

Recommendations

4. Require a Sustainable Operations Plan with Every Special Exception or Planned Development Zoning Map Amendment (ZMA-PD)
5. Incentivize the Construction of Data Centers that Exceed Environmental Standards
6. Advocate for Implementing a High-Energy Use Surcharge on Data Centers

Maintain community character

Recommendations

7. Adopt Flexible, Green Design Standards for Data Centers
8. Discourage Speculative Data Center Development by Incentivizing Projects to Pursue Planned Developments
9. Increase Setbacks and Screening for Data Centers Near Residential Areas
10. Amend the Noise Ordinance to Regulate Data Center Generator Testing

Ensure a transparent and inclusive process

Recommendations

11. Require All Data Centers to Undergo the Special Exception Process
12. Amend Planned Development Zoning to Regulate Data Center Locations and Impacts

Maximize local economic benefits

Recommendations

Policies 13 and 14 affect two Guiding Principles: Maximize Local Economic Benefits and Invest in Local Social Infrastructure.

13. Establish a Community Advisory Group and Verify Compliance Mechanisms to Recommend and Monitor Community Benefits Associated with Data Center Developments
14. Establish a Hybrid CBA Framework Combining Ordinance and Project-Specific Agreements

Invest in local social infrastructure

NEXT STEPS

Additional Public Meeting

- Present draft recommendations and proposed ordinance changes
- Invite public feedback and questions
- Include a mapping exercise to show where data centers are allowed and likely to be located based on the recommendations outlined in the data center task force report

Prioritize Key Amendments

- Identify which zoning and noise ordinance changes need immediate action
- Flag items requiring further study or stakeholder input

Economic Analysis

- Assess potential job creation and tax revenue impacts
- Provide a neutral cost-benefit review to guide policy decisions

Monitor Trends

- Track data center growth, technology changes, and community impacts
- Ensure regulations remain aligned with best practices and local needs

Appendices

TYPES OF DATA CENTERS

Edge	Enterprise/ Corporate	Colocation/ Wholesale	Hyperscale/ big tech campuses: **AWS, Google, Microsoft, Meta**
5,000sf – 10,000sf	**10,000sf – 50,000sf**	**50,000sf – 350,000sf** *1 – 10 acres*	**350,000sf +** *10 acres +*

TYPES OF DATA CENTERS

Edge

Compact and located close to end users or data sources

5,000sf – 10,000sf

Enterprise/Corporate

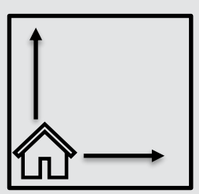
Owned and operated by a single organization to support its internal IT needs—either on-premise or at a dedicated off-site facility

10,000sf – 50,000sf

Source: Urban Land Institute. *Data Centers and the Built Environment: Considerations for Planning, Design, and Development*. November 2024. https://knowledge.uli.org

TYPES OF DATA CENTERS

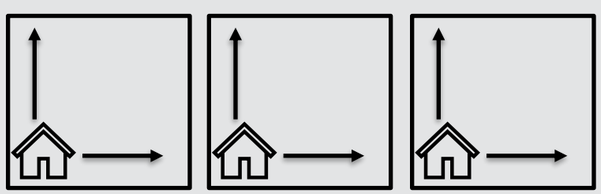
Colocation/Wholesale



Facility providers offer space, power, cooling, and physical security for equipment owned by multiple clients.

50,000sf - 350,000sf, 1 – 10 acres

Hyperscale



Large-scale facilities operated by major tech/cloud providers like AWS, Microsoft, and Google. Designed for massive scalability, high processing loads, and ultra-fast connectivity.

350,000+ sf, 10 + acres

Source: Urban Land Institute. *Data Centers and the Built Environment: Considerations for Planning, Design, and Development*. November 2024. https://knowledge.uli.org

Thank You

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY
QUALIFIED DATA CENTER TASK FORCE