

Oppose Leesburg Gateway's Proposed Data Center Town Plan Amendment

**Attend and Speak at the Public Hearing: Tuesday, Jan. 27 @ 7 p.m.
Town Council Chambers, Leesburg, VA**

The Leesburg Gateway data center developer is proposing an amendment to the Town Plan that would allow for data center and warehouse development in the Town gateway, an approximately 2-mile stretch along State Route 7, east of the Town border. The amendment would support a rezoning application that the developer is requesting for its new data center.

The bottom line: The proposed amendment contradicts citizen-supported Town Plan guiding principles and should be denied.

We've put together talking points explaining why the proposed data center Town Plan amendment is bad for Leesburg. You can use these to inform your comments to the Town Council.

- 1. The Plan amendment and proposed data center are neither strategic nor protective of the Town's critical Route 7 gateway.**
 - Route 7 is the main entrance to Leesburg and already has one approved data center. Allowing another promotes industrial sprawl, not a welcoming gateway.
 - The Town Plan does not identify this portion of Rte. 7 as an appropriate location for additional data centers; instead, it is more appropriate for mixed-use, walkable development. This data center is proposed to be built in the middle of Leesburg neighborhoods!
 - Dominion Energy, with State Corporation Commission (SCC) approval decides where transmission lines to serve these data centers go—not the Town or the developer. If lines cannot be buried, more above-ground transmission lines will further industrialize the gateway.
- 2. The location of the proposed data center – directly across from a residential development – degrades neighborhoods and makes them less desirable.**
 - The Town Plan explicitly seeks to avoid conflicts between data centers and residential areas, but this site is directly across from existing neighborhoods.
 - Data centers near homes are known to bring significant noise, pollution, and viewshed disruption, as well as heavy electrical infrastructure, leading to significant property value loss.
- 3. More data center development undermines Leesburg's sustainability commitments.**
 - Data centers are increasing the use of fossil fuels and contributing to increased air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.
 - Virginia's climate goals are unachievable with the massive and growing energy demand of data centers.

4. It creates serious unintended consequences.

- Dominion has stated data centers face a seven to eight year wait for power, with the costs of building additional transmission lines and other electrical infrastructure passed on to all ratepayers.
- This delay means data centers are increasingly turning to onsite fuel sources, including natural gas turbines and diesel generators.
- The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VA DEQ) regulates the air permits for onsite data center power generation (the Town does not control that process) and public hearings are not required.
- The Town's zoning definition of a data center (see below) explicitly allows electrical substations, backup generators, overhead powerlines, and other utility infrastructure required to operate the data center. It does not specifically prohibit natural gas turbines, meaning a data center could potentially be allowed to use them.

Data Center definition: [\(per Town draft zoning ordinance as of 11-17-25\)](#): "A facility used primarily for the storage, management, processing, and transmission of digital data, which houses computer and / or network equipment, systems, servers, appliances, and other associated components related to digital data operations. Such facilities may also include air handlers, power generators, water cooling and storage facilities, utility substations, **and other associated utility infrastructure to support sustained operations at a data center.**" (emphasis added)

- VA DEQ recently changed its guidance to allow data centers to run polluting Tier 2 emergency diesel generators during planned outages, such as when transmission lines are being built, increasing noise and air pollution.
- VA DEQ allows cleaner Tier 4 diesel generators (also noisy) to run for very long periods.
- Both air- and water-cooled data centers have negative impacts. Air-cooled data centers are noisier, but those cooled by water can use over half a million gallons a day.
- The Town has acknowledged that the full build-out of major water users (i.e. data centers), will exceed its water and sewer capacity, and stated that the Town should ensure that all new developments should provide accurate projected utility needs.

Leesburg has approved enough data centers and does not need any more, especially in this location. Its small-town charm and quality of life will be diminished.

Attend the public hearing and let the Town Council know what you think.

If you cannot attend the meeting, please email the Town Council:

council@leesburgva.gov

Questions? Send PEC an email at loudoun@pecva.org.

