

February 16, 2026

Howell Township Planning Commission
3525 Byron Road
Howell, MI 48855

To the members of the Howell Township Planning Commission,

The following data center ordinance outline checklist is being provided for consideration by the Howell Township Resident Research Committee (RRC). The items included in the following outline checklist are commonly found in data center ordinance examples and the RRC felt this list might be helpful to have on hand for reference. This is simply being provided as a starting point, knowing there will likely be additional items the PC would like to add and/or move around.

DATA CENTER ORDINANCE OUTLINE CHECKLIST

PURPOSE

1. Purpose statement.

DEFINITIONS

1. Starting list of commonly used definitions already submitted, items to be added as needed.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

1. Application fee.
2. Public notification zone and involvement process.
3. Clear entity requirements - names of all owners.
4. Site plan requirements (detailed list of what we would like on a site plan: such as drawings needing to be to scale, elevations, material staging, hvac plan, fuel storage, utility lines, mechanical yards, etc., expiration, deviance should require reapproval).
5. Anticipated operation reports detailing items such as projected power and water usage, plans for any on site power generation, compliance monitoring plans for those.
6. Noise mitigation and monitoring plan.
7. Construction phase plan.
8. Emergency/disaster plan.
9. Decommissioning plan - 125% of estimated total cost.
10. Impact studies required, including economic impact analysis.
11. Signed acknowledgement from developer and end user of our public notification and involvement process, and our ordinances to accompany all applications.

ZONING REQUIREMENTS

1. Zoning restricted to data center overlay district in the current industrial zone - recommended for all except ancillary data centers.
2. Additional zoning requirements - conditional rezoning & special use permit requirements.

SITING REQUIREMENTS

1. Minimum distance requirements from residential and sensitive receptor parcels.
2. Minimum distances from other Data Centers (prevents saturation, prevents minor/medium/major buildings on separate adjoining parcels from becoming a campus without campus regulations).

SITE DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

1. Lot coverage %.
2. Setbacks for buildings, structures, mechanical yards.
3. Entrance/access, road commission agreements.
4. Building orientation (utilize building positioning for sound mitigation).
5. Mechanical/equipment placement requirements.
6. Additional structure placement requirements.
7. Parking requirements.
8. Utility transmission and distribution line requirements.
9. Lighting requirements.
10. Fencing requirements.
11. Storm water management.
12. Drain tile inspection requirements.
13. Landscaping and berm requirements.
14. Signage.

BUILDING DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

1. Compatibility.
2. Height restrictions.
3. Massing and scale.
4. Facade/aesthetic requirements.
5. Additional structure design requirements.
6. Noise mitigation design requirements.
7. Cooling system requirements (example liquid immersion cooling w/ plant based oil, closed loop water cooling as back up).
8. Fire suppression design requirements.
9. Sustainability design requirements.

UTILITY REQUIREMENTS

1. Utility transmission & distribution line requirements - bury utilities.
2. Fuel storage threshold and requirements.

ON-SITE POWER GENERATION

1. On-site solar limited to rooftop.
2. Any generators shall be tier 4 compliant.
3. Back up power usage limitations and testing schedules.
4. Ground mounted mechanical equipment requirements.
5. Thinking ahead - small modular reactor restrictions.

NOISE REGULATIONS

1. Sound limit (example 45dB Lmax), includes all hvac equipment, at data center parcel property line.
2. Sound audit schedule & requirements - dBc & dBz wavelengths included in all testing.
3. Buildings utilized for mitigation, sound dampening materials utilized, including for equipment.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

1. Site plan approval process (example project approval in sections at set intervals to ensure compliance).
2. Complaint resolution plan.

MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS

1. HVAC maintenance to ensure quiet equipment operation.
2. No excessive deterioration.

COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

1. Fire protection plan.
2. FCC & airspace requirements.
3. Emissions/air quality.
4. Inspections - Township can inspect anytime.
5. Hazardous materials compliance, storage & emergency plan.
6. Ongoing monitoring and reporting - generator logs.
7. Annual Report Fines/Remedies
8. Review of decommissioning plan (a min of every 2 yrs)

DISCLAIMERS

Items such as:

1. Validity and Severability - If any portion of this Ordinance is found invalid for any reason, such holding will not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Ordinance.
2. Repealer - All other ordinances inconsistent with the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent necessary to give this Ordinance full force and effect.
3. Effective date.