

MOTION: BEETON

**June 25, 2026
Regular Meeting
Res. No 26-011**

SECOND: BOUTTE

**RE: GUIDANCE FOR EVALUATING MITIGATION MEASURES PROPOSED IN
DATA CENTER PROFER AND SPECIAL USE PERMITS**

ACTION: APPROVED

WHEREAS, Prince William County (PWC) adopted climate mitigation and climate resilience goals, including a 50% reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2030 and attaining 100% use of renewable energy by 2035 ([Res No 20-773 Climate Mitigation and Resiliency Goals.pdf](#)); and

WHEREAS, Data centers are, by far, the biggest source of new carbon emissions and electricity demand in PWC. Rapid growth in this sector is putting us on track to badly miss our county GHG goals, and could play a significant role in the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments region missing its regional goals; and

WHEREAS, the county has maximum leverage to mitigate data center impacts while applications are in the permitting process, when the applicants can propose proffers. The Sustainability Commission understands that proffers are voluntary, and that local jurisdictions can't impose them, but through the proffer process, many of these mitigations can be achieved if it is made clear to the industry that they are expected. The same proffers can be used more prescriptively as conditions for Special Use Permits (SUPs); and

WHEREAS, existing proffers from data centers are not achieving meaningful GHG emission reductions or otherwise mitigating the impacts of data centers; and

WHEREAS, there are over a dozen new data center projects in the pipeline, so there is an immediate need for an effective policy on proffers; and

WHEREAS, the Sustainability Commission continues to see the need for a uniform effective mitigation approach to proffers for data centers across the county government. This includes Planning staff, Environmental Management staff, the Planning Commission, the Board of County Supervisors, the Economic Development staff, etc.; and

WHEREAS, to address the situation outlined above, in June 2025 the Sustainability Commission published an initial list of [recommended proffers for data center applications](#). The Commission is updating the list to reflect recent state legislation and new technical developments, and formalizing the list through this resolution; and

WHEREAS, since PWC has not had the widespread adoption of proffer priorities that would provide significant mitigation of data center impacts, the Sustainability Commission urges PWC decision makers to address this critical need by taking a systematic and effective approach to mitigating impacts from data centers as part of the land-use process;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Sustainability Commission recommends the following mitigation measures be considered by applicants for inclusion in proffers and special use permits, and that their inclusion be viewed by the County as being effective in mitigating impacts.

Energy Supply

1. Commit to clean energy procurement (90% renewable by 2028). Encourage use of renewable energy certificates or direct procurement using the framework in the Virginia Clean Economy Act. ("Clean energy" refers to electricity generated through new or recently commissioned zero-carbon sources (e.g., solar, wind, nuclear, geothermal).
2. Commit to no on-site fossil-fueled electricity generation, other than emergency back-up generators.
3. Provide annual reporting of energy consumption, energy sources, and associated greenhouse gas emissions to the county.

Water Resource Management

1. Commit to not using groundwater.
2. Provide a plan to avoid polluting surface water or groundwater on or near the site. The plan should include measures, such as secondary containment, to control fuel (e.g., from diesel fuel from generators) and hazardous chemical spills. Regular sampling and testing of data center runoff affecting local drinking water quality or pollution of local streams, ponds, lakes, and other surface water should be required with an annually updated plan to accomplish this to include levels of salinity, cleaning chemicals, lubricants, and heavy metals.
3. A plan for responding to accidental chemical spills such as diesel fuel from generators should be required prior to site plan stage, detailing measures that will be taken to protect the surrounding community, environment, and natural resources. Secondary containment for all chemical storage and use locations should be provided.
4. Given the problem of high salinity and total dissolved solids (TDS) levels in the Occoquan reservoir (the water supply for much of Prince William and Fairfax Counties), provide a plan to minimize discharge of wastewater with high salinity and/or TDS. Wastewater discharged to the Upper Occoquan Service Authority (UOSA) or any other treatment plant must meet Safe Drinking Water Act primary and secondary maximum contaminant levels for salt and chemical contaminants that UOSA cannot remove.
5. Provide the county with regular reporting on water use and discharge. This information should be publicly available.

Green Building/ Energy and Resource Efficiency

1. Use best practices for energy efficiency guided by national and international standards e.g. NC/ASHRAE 90.4, ISO/IEC 30134 series for key performance indicators
2. Consider trade-offs between water use and energy use (and resulting carbon emissions) in the design of cooling systems; commit to using a system that minimizes both water use and carbon emissions.
3. Use sustainable building materials, including low embodied carbon concrete.
4. Commit to best practices for managing buffer areas, including native plants and management of invasive plants.
5. Save mature trees on site as much as possible. Plant the maximum number of native mature trees in buffer areas while maximizing survivability, in consultation with the County arborists. If unable to save mature trees, provide funding for the County's reforestation program to offset carbon impacts.
6. Recycle construction waste.

Air Quality

1. Commit to using on-site diesel or natural gas generators only in true emergency situations, not to bridge the gap until the facility is connected to the grid or to supplement the power grid. Install air quality monitors onsite at all data centers for hourly monitoring to feed into a public alert system.
2. Use best available control technology to reduce pollutants and emissions from backup generators.

Decommissioning

1. Applicant commit to environmentally safe decommissioning of the facility at the end of its lifetime as a data center, including the following measures:
 - a. Submit a decommissioning plan prior to rezoning approval, unless a reuse plan is provided;
 - b. Remove all hazardous materials and equipment in accordance with applicable regulations;
 - c. Deconstruct or repurpose facilities within a reasonable timeframe after cessation of operations;
 - d. Complete full site remediation;
 - e. Remove below-ground infrastructure;
 - f. Remove fencing and exterior lighting upon closure; and
 - g. Provide financial assurance, such as escrow or bonding, sufficient to cover decommissioning costs prior to issuance of occupancy permits. All fencing and exterior lighting should be removed at completion of decommissioning.

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Votes:

Ayes: By acclimation

Nays: None

Absent from Vote: Commissioner J. Randall Freed

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Salita Gray

ATTEST: _____
Clerk of Sustainability Commission