St. Charles Parish

Meeting Agenda

Legislative Committee

St. Charles Parish Courthouse
15045 Highway 18
P.O. Box 302
Hahnville, LA 70057
985-783-5125
www.stcharlesparish.gov

Chairman: Bob Fisher
Committee Members: Council as a Whole

Monday, April 6, 2026 | **5:00 PM** | **Council Chambers, Courthouse**

Final

SILENT PRAYER / PLEDGE

MATTERS BEFORE COMMITTEE

2026-0089 Discussion regarding code revisions as it pertains to Data Centers.

Accommodations for Disabled

St. Charles Parish will upon request and with three (3) days advanced notice provide reasonable accommodation to any disabled individual wishing to attend the meeting. Anyone requiring reasonable accommodation is requested to contact the Office of the Council Secretary at (985) 783-5125 to discuss the particular accommodations needed.

###-#-ORD
INTRODUCED BY: MATTHEW JEWELL, PARISH PRESIDENT
(DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ZONING)

ORDINANCE NO. _____

An ordinance to amend the St. Charles Parish Code of Ordinances, Appendix A. – St. Charles Parish Zoning Ordinance of 1981, Section III., Definitions, adding a definition for Data Center; Section VI., Zoning district criteria and regulations., D. Manufacturing and industry districts, adding Data Centers as a Special Permit Use in the M-1 district and a permitted use in the M-2 district; and adding requirements for data centers to Section VII., Supplemental use and performance regulations.

WHEREAS, Data centers and digital infrastructure are a growing component of the modern economy, supporting cloud computing, artificial intelligence, telecommunications, and business operations; and,

WHEREAS, St. Charles Parish has a long history of supporting large-scale industrial development and possesses the infrastructure and industrial corridors, necessary to accommodate such uses; and,

WHEREAS, Data centers represent a form of industrial development that, when properly sited and designed, can operate with minimal impacts related to traffic, emissions, and surrounding land uses; and,

WHEREAS, Data centers are not specifically defined or regulated under the current St. Charles Parish Zoning Ordinance, and may otherwise be interpreted as permitted uses within existing industrial zoning districts; and,

WHEREAS, the Parish recognizes that data centers are not a one-size-fits-all use and range from smaller, lower-impact facilities to large-scale campuses, each with different infrastructure and land-use considerations; and,

WHEREAS, the Parish desires to provide clarity and predictability for both residents and industry by establishing reasonable standards for the siting and operation of data centers; and,

WHEREAS, the Parish further desires to ensure that data center development occurs in a manner that is compatible with surrounding land uses and includes appropriate safeguards related to noise, setbacks, and visual impacts; and,

WHEREAS, these amendments are intended to proactively establish standards and protections, rather than restrict or prohibit data center development, while preserving the Parish's ability to attract appropriate economic investment; and,

WHEREAS, the Planning and Zoning Department recommended approval of these amendments; and,

WHEREAS, the Planning and Zoning Commission recommended approval at its regular meeting on MONTH, DAY, 2026.

THE ST. CHARLES PARISH COUNCIL HEREBY ORDAINS:

SECTION I. The St. Charles Parish Zoning Ordinance of 1981, Section III. – Definitions., is amended to add the definition for Data center to the list of terms in alphabetical order, as new text written in underline below:

Data center: A facility, campus of facilities, or interconnected facilities with a primary purpose of processing, storage, retrieval, or communication of data and developed to power, cool, secure, or connect its own equipment or the equipment of its customers. Does not include data processing, storage, retrieval, or communication equipment customarily incidental to an otherwise permitted use, such as servers associated with an office building.

SECTION II. The St. Charles Parish Zoning Ordinance of 1981, Section VI. – Zoning district criteria and regulations., D. Manufacturing and industry districts, [I.] M-1 Light manufacturing and industry district:, 1. Use Regulations: a., is amended to add the additional text shown in underline below:

(32) Data Centers, in accordance with Section VII, Supplemental Use and Performance Regulations.

SECTION III. The St. Charles Parish Zoning Ordinance of 1981, Section VI. – Zoning district criteria and regulations., D. Manufacturing and industry districts, [II.] M-2. Heavy manufacturing and industry:, 1. Use Regulations, a., is amended to add the additional text shown in underline below:

(12) Data Centers (with onsite primary energy generating facilities supplying continuous power during normal operations), in accordance with Section VII, Supplemental Use and Performance Regulations.

SECTION IV. The St. Charles Parish Zoning Ordinance of 1981, Section VII. – Supplemental use and performance regulations., is amended to add the additional text shown in underline below:

1. The following uses are subject to the regulations set forth herin:

Bars, dancehalls, nightclubs, taverns.

a. A Class A liquor license is required through the St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office.

Data Centers

Data Centers shall be subject to the additional regulations and requirements set forth below:

a. Data Centers utilizing onsite primary energy-generating facilities supplying continuous power during normal operations are limited to the M-2, Heavy manufacturing and industry zoning district. In addition to the requirements of this section, energy-generating facilities and associated equipment (including fuel storage) for this type of development are subject to the Special Provisions outlined under the M-2, Heavy manufacturing and industry zoning district.

    i. Emergency, back-up, or redundant power generation that can independently power a facility during a power loss or disruption in primary power availability is permissible in the M-1 zoning district providing that it complies with the requirements of this section.

b. Setbacks. Primary buildings and equipment must be a minimum of three hundred feet (300') from residential zoning districts, and the property boundaries of school sites (including day care centers), assisted living facilities/nursing homes, or parks. Accessory uses of lesser intensity such as offices and parking facilities may be developed within this area.

c. Landscape Buffer. A landscape buffer must be installed where data center developments are adjacent to residential zoning districts, school sites (including day care centers), assisted living facilities/nursing homes, or parks.

    If existing vegetation is adequate to meet the intent of the required landscape buffer, this existing vegetation may be utilized for all or part of the required landscape buffer.

    The landscape buffer shall comply with the following requirements:

    i. The landscape buffer shall be at least 25 feet deep and may be part of the minimum setback distance.

ii. The landscape buffer shall be free of any structures, equipment, storage areas, parking facilities, etc.

iii. The landscape buffer must consist of a continuous line of native Class A and Class B trees and shrubs as listed in Section VIII., I. Landscaping requirements Tables 8-4 and 8-5, layered in a manner to create a dense, opaque, four-season visual barrier. The following specific planting criteria apply:

1. A minimum of 50 percent of all plants must be evergreen.
2. No more than 30 percent of any one species will be allowed.
3. Evergreen trees must be a minimum of six feet in height at installation.
4. Deciduous trees must have a minimum of 2 ½ inches caliper at installation.
5. All shrubs must be a minimum of 18 inches in height at installation.
6. A minimum of 50 percent of the evergreen shrubs must reach a minimum of five feet within three years of installation.

iv. An earthen berm and/or solid wall may be used in lieu of a fully planted, layered buffer as described above, provided the berm and/or wall is a minimum of six feet above the adjacent average ground level, is appropriately sloped and topped with ground cover plantings to ensure stability, and supplemented with Class A evergreen trees spaced appropriately to ensure survival according to their type along either side of the berm or wall.

v. All landscaping must be maintained and warrantied for one year. Any plant material during the one-year period deemed unhealthy by the parish must be replaced immediately.

vi. Stamped landscape plans by a licensed landscape architect or landscape horticulturalist is required for permitting. At the completion of the landscape buffer installation a certification of completion signed by the licensed landscape architect or landscape horticulturalist designer of record must be submitted to the parish.

vii. Failure to continuously maintain the foregoing visual buffers will constitute a violation of the Zoning Ordinance.

viii. Required landscape buffers do not substitute for the standard landscaping requirements as per Zoning Ordinance Section VIII. – Site plan review and design requirements.

d. Equipment Screening. Ground-mounted and roof-mounted equipment used for cooling, ventilating, or otherwise operating the facility, including backup power generators, shall be screened from public roadways, residential zoning districts, school sites (including day care centers), assisted living facilities/nursing homes, or parks to minimize visual and noise impacts. The following methods may be used to screen equipment:

i. Full enclosures (when mechanically feasible).

ii. The principal data center building(s) or accessory building(s)

iii. A visually solid fence, screen wall or panel, parapet wall, which may be designed with louvered panels or perforated surfaces for ventilation.

iv. Landscape buffering (including existing vegetation) as detailed by section c. above.

e. Noise. The following requirements are intended to address noise impacts from Data Centers and apply when adjacent to Residential Areas and Noise Sensitive Areas as defined under Chapter 24 – NOISE.

i. Any noise produced by the Data Center shall not exceed fifty-five (55) dBA, as measured at any property line adjacent to Residential and Noise Sensitive Areas.

ii. Testing backup power generators and similar equipment shall be limited to weekdays between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

The foregoing ordinance having been submitted to a vote, the vote thereon was as follows:

And the ordinance was declared adopted this _____ day of _____, 2026, to become effective five (5) days after publication in the Official Journal.

CHAIRMAN: _____

SECRETARY: _____

DLVD/PARISH PRESIDENT: _____

APPROVED : _____ DISAPPROVED:_____

PARISH PRESIDENT: _____

RETD/SECRETARY: _____

AT: _____ RECD BY: _____