

Sully District Council of Citizens Associations



P.O. Box 230042
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20 May 2024

Joint Sully District Land Use and Transportation Committee Resolution on the “Data Centers” Zoning Ordinance Amendment

WHEREAS the Sully District Council of Citizens Associations (“SDC”) and West Fairfax County Citizens Association (“WFCCA”) Joint Land Use Committee (the “Joint Committee”) recognizes the paramount importance of the protection of the Occoquan Watershed and upholding Fairfax County’s environmental policies, as expressed in the adopted Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS both SDCCA and WFCCA have long supported protection of residential neighborhoods from development impacts, including traffic, stormwater, noise and other detrimental effects, as well as protecting natural communities, including threatened species, and preserving contiguous wildlife habitat; and

WHEREAS the SDCCA and the WFCCA include many member communities and individual residents within the residential conservation (R-C) zoning district, in the western corner of Fairfax County; and

WHEREAS the Joint Committee has expressed strong objections in the past to data center applications which abut residential districts, including two recent applications (Parkstone and Chantilly Premier) where the data center application site was zoned to an industrial district, but was immediately adjacent to a residential neighborhood zoned R-C (residential conservation), causing significant impacts on the residents, as well as impacts on the environment and infrastructure; and

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WHEREAS the Joint Committee has carefully considered the staff report dated May 17, 2024, recommending amendments to the zoning ordinance concerning Data Centers; and

WHEREAS the Joint Committee shares the concerns of many citizens and groups across Fairfax County, that the **harmful impacts caused by the proliferation of data centers in Northern Virginia affect our quality of life, and warrant an open and meaningful public hearing process**; and

WHEREAS the Joint Committee wishes to express its opposition, **in the strongest possible terms**, to the zoning ordinance allowing data centers as a by-right use, in recognition of the significant impacts of this use on the infrastructure and the environment, on water quality, air quality, noise and public health, causing massive opposition from community members; and

WHEREAS the Joint Committee strongly supports the rights of Fairfax County citizens to have **notice and an opportunity to be heard** regarding data centers, including an audience with the decisionmakers, in an open public hearing, as a matter of fundamental fairness; and

WHEREAS the Joint Committee recognizes that the zoning district of a given application site does not necessarily limit the harmful impacts of a data center, given the many locations in Fairfax County where industrial districts abut residential; and

WHEREAS the Joint Committee and local residents have expressed strong objections in the past to data center applications, including Parkstone and Chantilly Premier, raising, among others, the following concerns:

- A) Impacts on **water quality** of the Occoquan Reservoir, from delivery and storage of diesel fuel, and the inconsistency of the use with long-established objectives of the adopted Comprehensive Plan;
- B) Impacts on **the electrical grid** from a use currently lacking sufficient existing electrical capacity or infrastructure, without any cap on the quantity of electric power needed for the use;
- C) Increased **cost** to the local consumers for paying for the electric infrastructure upgrades necessary to support the use;

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- D) Inability to evaluate **harmful impacts on adjacent residential** communities;
- E) Impacts from **new electrical substations and transmission lines** to serve the data centers;
- F) **Air pollution** impacts from the diesel generators, and the cumulative effects of carcinogenic particulates on public health, especially in view of the DEQ variances for air pollution standards recently considered, caused by the proliferation of data centers;
- G) Impacts on the local **water supply** from an unmitigated use without any cap on the quantity of water to be used;
- H) The use of **diesel generators**, and the failure to require cleaner technology than diesel generators, or implement a sunset provision on the use of diesel;
- I) Impacts of **noise levels** on the surrounding residences, including cumulative impacts of noise from all sources;
- J) Impacts of the **building heights** on the character of adjacent residential neighborhoods;
- K) Ongoing and increased awareness of the negative impacts of the **proliferation** of data centers in Northern Virginia.

Now, therefore, in view of the foregoing, BE IT RESOLVED as follows:

- 1. The Joint Committee, in the strongest possible terms, opposes any zoning ordinance amendment which allows data centers as a by right use, in any zoning district in Fairfax County.**
- 2. The Joint Committee, in the strongest possible terms, supports the rights of citizens to notice and an opportunity to be heard, through an open and meaningful public hearing process, to allow transparency and case by case mitigation of impacts if any more data centers are to be approved.**
- 3. The Joint Committee, in the strongest possible terms, requests the Fairfax County Planning Commission to recommend that all data centers in Fairfax County be a special exception use, and require a public hearing, due to the importance of the decisions, and the magnitude of the impacts.**

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- 4. The Joint Committee requests the Fairfax County Planning Commission recommend denial and readvertisement of the proposed zoning ordinance amendment, to the extent that the above items are deemed to be outside the scope of the advertising, in view of the foregoing concerns.**

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be communicated forthwith to the Fairfax County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors, as well as the General Assembly members for this area.

This resolution was approved by the Joint Committee at its 17 April 2023 meeting:

Approved by:

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Note that this document is posted at

http://www.sullydistrict.org/resolutions/20240520_JSDLU&TC_Resolution_DataCenters.pdf