

HUBBARD TOWNSHIP ZONING COMMISSION
Hubbard Township Administration Building
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Hubbard, Ohio 44425-9700
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Hubbard Township Trustees
2600 Elmwood Dr., Ext.
Hubbard, OH. 44425

September 15, 2026

Dear Hubbard Township Trustees:

The Hubbard Township Zoning Commission has completed its work on the following case and now requests your consideration:

Zoning Case 26-004

A proposal for an all-new Article XX (Data Centers and Data Center Accessory Uses) and its various sections – and a definition - for inclusion in the township Resolution.

At its September 15, 2026 meeting and public hearing, two recommendations of approval were to be sent to the trustees, they were:

A). A motion by Mr. Doughton and second from Ms. Fluent of the following: Article XX is being forwarded for approval of the trustees, noting that the recommendations from the Trumbull County Planning Commission be reviewed by the Zoning Commission members and request review and recommendations from the trustees to the Zoning Commission. The vote was 4-0 (Doughton, Fluent, Evans, Cook).

B). A motion by Ms. Fluent and a second from Mr. Doughton of the following under Permitted Zoning Districts: Data Centers are permitted only in the following zoning districts within Hubbard Township, subject to the standards and approval requirements of this amendment:

- Heavy Industrial (I-2) District – large-scale data centers permitted by right, subject to site plan approval.
 - General Industrial (I-1) District – Data Centers with a Critical IT Load of less than ten (10) MW permitted by right, subject to site plan approval. Large-scale data centers with Critical IT Load of ten (10) MW or more permitted by Conditional Use Permit only.
- Data Centers are expressly prohibited in all Residential (R-1, R-2, R-3), Agricultural (A-1), Conservation (CON) and Flood Plain (FP) zoning districts.

The vote was 4-0 (Fluent, Doughton, Evans, Cook).

Attached, please find the supporting documents, which the Zoning Commission used to formulate its decision.

Sincerely, 

John Bassetti, secretary/Hubbard Township Zoning Commission

ARTICLE XX: DATA CENTERS AND DATA CENTER ACCESSORY USES

DATA CENTERS, high energy use facilities, battery energy storage systems, private substations, generator yards, and large scale cooling facilities shall be permitted only as conditional uses and only upon proof that the proposed use will not create adverse impacts related to noise, vibration, lighting, traffic, water demand, wastewater, stormwater, emergency services, fire risk, utility infrastructure, neighboring property values, or the quiet enjoyment of surrounding residential property.

DEFINITION:

“DATA CENTER” and/or “DATA FARM, DATA BANK” means a facility used for the storage, management and dissemination of digital data which houses computer, telecommunication and/or network equipment, systems, servers, appliances and other associated components related to digital data operations, and/or facility designed or modified to house networked computers and data and transaction processing equipment and related infrastructure support equipment, including but not limited to server farms, cloud computing hubs and colocation centers.

“DATA CENTER ACCESSORY USES” refers to the essential, supporting infrastructure, buildings and systems required to operate and maintain the primary computing hardware.

Section 2001: Intent

The purpose of this Article is to promote and protect the public health, welfare and safety by regulating existing and proposed DATA CENTERS and DATA CENTER ACCESSORY USES. It is intended to protect the property values, create a more attractive economic and business climate, enhance and protect the physical appearance of the community, and preserve the scenic and natural beauty of designated areas.

Section 2002: Compliance

The facility shall comply with all applicable federal, state and local regulations.

Section 2003: General Requirements

The regulations contained in the Section shall apply to all DATA CENTERS and DATA CENTER ACCESSORY USES.

A. Setbacks:

1. DATA CENTERS and DATA CENTER ACCESSORY USES shall have a minimum setback of 300 feet from any residential zoning districts or uses.
2. DATA CENTERS and DATA CENTER ACCESSORY USES shall have a minimum setback of 500 feet from an educational institution, childcare facility, youth center, community center, recreational facility, park, church or religious institution, medical facility or other use where individuals under 21 years of age regularly gather, measured from each property boundary.

B: Lot Size:

1. A minimum of 100 acres will be required for any data center campus or high energy industrial use.

C: Maximum Lot Coverage:

1. Buildings, substations, generators, battery systems, pavement, cooling and equipment shall not cover more than 50% of the total lot.

D. Aesthetics:

1. Any DATA CENTER or DATA CENTER ACCESSORY USE building that faces a road or existing residential use must comply with the following:
 - a. No blank warehouse style walls
 - b. Earth tone colors, masonry or decorative facades
 - c. A change in building material, pattern, texture or color as well as a change in building height every 150 horizontal feet
2. Any DATA CENTER or DATA CENTER ACCESSORY USE building shall have a maximum height of 35 feet.

3. There shall be no outdoor server yards or exposed mechanical yards. All cooling, generators, switchgear, transformers and battery systems must be screened or enclosed.

E: Buffer:

1. Where DATA CENTERS and DATA CENTER ACCESSORY USES abut a residential or institutional or business district use or public right-of-way, enhanced screening or screen planting buffer is required. This is to include fencing and a double row of evergreens a minimum of 3 feet tall at planting, planted 10 feet apart.

F: Security:

1. The facility shall provide:
 - a. Controlled access points.
 - b. Perimeter fencing and secured building access.
 - c. 24-hour on-site surveillance consistent with industry standards

G. Lighting:

1. All lights and light poles shall be located at least 10 feet from any street right-of way or property line, and all lighting shall be fully shielded and reflected away from adjacent streets and properties.
2. All poles shall be a maximum of 15 feet in height.
3. There shall be zero uplight; no light shall be aimed upward.
4. All lighting must be certified Dark Sky compliant.
5. Security lights must have motion dimming and dim when not actively needed.
6. No wall packs facing homes unless shielded.
7. No illuminated signs shall face residential areas and shall comply with existing zoning regulations.

H. Traffic and Road Restrictions:

1. The applicant shall demonstrate that truck and equipment traffic associated with constructions, operation, servicing and maintenance will not create hazards or congestion on nearby roadways.
 - a. The applicant shall provide a traffic impact study.
 - b. The proposed construction route must be approved by the Hubbard Township Zoning Office.
 - c. No truck traffic through residential streets.
 - d. The applicant must sign a road maintenance agreement with the proper authority and will be responsible to pay for fixing damage to roads.
 - e. A bond designated by Township Trustees at the time of construction, based on size and to the maximum load limit allowed, will be required for Township roads.
 - f. The applicant will be responsible for mud, dust and debris control on all State, County and Township roads.
 - g. There will be no overnight truck staging on Township roads.
 - h. Construction will be limited to Monday through Friday 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM and Saturday by approval only. No Sunday work.

I. Noise and Vibrations:

1. The applicant shall demonstrate through a sound study conducted by a qualified professional that the sound generated by a DATA CENTER or DATA CENTER ACCESSORY USE during normal operations shall be limited to a maximum sustained daytime (7:00 AM to 7:00 PM EST Monday-Friday) decibel level of 60 dB(A) and a maximum sustained nighttime and weekend (7:00 PM to 7:00 AM Monday-Friday and all day Saturday and Sunday) decibel level of 57 dB(A) as measured from the property line of the use. Such study shall be conducted using Sound Level Meters described in ANSI S1.4-2104 and generally accepted methodology. A sound study shall be conducted at the following phases:

- a. A preliminary study shall be conducted as part of the special exception process. The preliminary study shall include recommended sound-reducing materials or systems as needed to meet the aforesaid requirements.
 - b. An interim sound study shall be conducted during the building permit approval process based upon the proposed user or users of the DATA CENTER or DATA CENTER ACCESSORY USES depicted on the building plans. Any sound-reducing materials or systems recommended by the interim sound study shall be incorporated into the construction plans for use.
 - c. An as-built sound study shall be conducted 6 months after issuance of the certificate of occupancy and prior to the final escrow release for any land development phase. An as-built sound study may also be required thereafter by the Township. If it is determined by the as-built sound study that there is a violation of the aforesaid noise limits, it shall be considered a violation of this Ordinance.
2. The applicant shall provide a vibration study prepared by a qualified professional that demonstrates that no vibration from the DATA CENTER or DATA CENTER ACCESSORY USES or associated equipment will be perceptible to the human sense of feeling beyond the property line.
3. DATA CENTERS and DATA CENTER ACCESSORY USES shall not exceed a maximum of sustained noise levels of 57 dB(A) at the boundary of residential zoning districts or uses or the lot line of any property developed with a sensitive receptor as explained in 310.200(B),
4. No tonal, pulsing, humming or vibration noise will be permitted. Any noise with a pure tone, vibration or recurring pulse will be considered a violation even if the dB(A) number passes.
5. Noise testing shall be conducted annually and after any equipment expansion. All final reports shall be provided to the Township Zoning Office.
6. Routine generator testing will only be permitted Monday through Friday from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM EST. No weekend or nighttime testing except in the event of a true emergency.

J: Emergency Management:

This section shall apply to above ground and underground construction.

1. The applicant shall submit an Emergency Response Plan (ERP) prepared by a qualified professional. The ERP shall be reviewed and accepted by the local fire department and the Trumbull County Emergency Management Services as part of the special exception process and will include an evaluation of the access roads and hydrant locations within the site to ensure suitable access for emergency equipment within the site.
2. An emergency drill with the local and/or surrounding fire departments shall be conducted annually.
3. The applicant shall pay for any specialized training and equipment which may be needed, as determined by the local fire department.
4. Any DATA CENTER or DATA CENTER USES proposing battery storage or any other device or group of devices capable of storing energy in order to supply electrical energy at a later time, whether the energy is stored for use on-site or off-site shall demonstrate compliance with:
 - a. NFPA standards
 - b. All state and federal environmental regulations
 - c. Trumbull County emergency management safety protocols
5. The applicant shall provide a hazardous materials inventory to the local fire department and to the Township Zoning Office.
6. The applicant shall provide a generator fuel storage plan to the local fire department and to the Township Zoning Office.

K: Power Supply:

1. If the applicant proposes to connect the DATA CENTER or DATA CENTER ACCESSORY USES to the electric grid, the applicant shall provide documentation from the applicable electric service provider certifying that the necessary capacity is available and that the electric service provider will serve the DATA CENTER and/or DATA CENTER ACCESSORY USES.

2. The applicant shall provide from the electric service provider documentation showing the grid impact, substation needs, transmission upgrades and that the applicant will be responsible for paying for any new equipment/upgrades that will be required.
3. New transmission lines, substations, switchyards, transformers and battery storage will require separate approval.
4. Nuclear, coal, oil, gas and diesel powered generation is prohibited for full-time electrical generators. All generators must operate and comply with applicable state and federal guidelines and permitting standards.

L: Emergency/Back-up Power:

1. Back-up generators shall meet all applicable state and federal emissions standards.
2. Emergency energy generation shall be used only at the following times, unless otherwise required by a stricter regulation:
 - a. When the primary source of energy is not available due to an emergency outage.
 - b. During routine maintenance or readiness testing for a short term duration of time and capped at 100 hours per year.
 - c. Routine maintenance testing of back-up energy generation is restricted to the hours of 9:00 AM through 3:00 PM EST Monday through Friday.
3. The applicant shall design and locate emergency energy generated systems to limit noise and visual impacts.

M: Stormwater, Water Supply, Water Use and Wastewater:

1. Stormwater Management:
 - a. The applicant shall meet all provisions of the Trumbull County's stormwater management ordinance and associated requirements for post-constructions stormwater management.

2. Water Supply:

- a. Any proposal for a DATA CENTER or DATA CENTER ACCESSORY USE shall include a letter from the operator providing an analysis of the anticipated raw water needs and proposed sources thereof. If the use will be supplied by a public water supply, the applicant shall submit written documentation from the public water authority certifying that the public water authority has the capacity to supply the proposed amount of water usage.
- b. Closed loop cooling only; no evaporative cooling will be permitted unless specifically approved.
- c. No well drilling will be permitted. Water must be purchased from the public water supply or trucked in.
- d. No direct or outtake of the water supply from the Shenango River and its tributaries shall be allowed.

3. Wastewater:

- a. The applicant shall demonstrate that adequate means of wastewater disposal, including domestic wastewater and wastewater used for cooling or industrial purposes have been provided and approved by the local sanitary authority and the Ohio Department of Environmental Protection.

N: Vacation, abandonment and/or decommissioning

1. A decommissioning plan shall be required at the time of the land development plan and construction permit application for all proposed DATA CENTERS and DATA CENTER ACCESSORY USES under the jurisdiction of this Zoning Ordinance that establishes the following:
 - a. A detailed inventory, timelines, management and removal of physical equipment, disposal of hazardous and recycling materials, and plans for future use or restoration of the site.

- b. A performance bond, decommissioning trust or escrow account, or letter of credit or a financial guarantee in an amount to be based upon the estimated cost of decommissioning to ensure completion of the decommissioning.
2. Unless otherwise stipulated, the applicant/owner shall provide written notice to the Trumbull County Planning Commission at least 30 days in advance of the cessation or abandonment of this use.
3. Decommissioning must begin within one year of discontinuation of DATA CENTER or DATA CENTER ACCESSORY USES operations, or upon notice of abandonment by the operator, whichever occurs first.
Decommissioning shall be completed within 18 months thereafter, unless extended by the Township Trustees in writing and for good cause.
4. If neither the facility owner or operator, nor the landlord complete decommissioning within the periods described above, then the Township may take such measures as necessary to complete decommissioning, utilizing all of any of the decommissioning funds. The entry into and submission of evidence of a participating landowner agreement to the Township shall constitute agreement and consent of the parties to the agreement, their respective heirs, successors and assigns that the Township may take such action as necessary to implement the decommissioning plan.
5. The escrow agent shall release the decommissioning funds when the facility owner or operator has demonstrated and the municipality concurs that decommissioning has been satisfactorily completed, or upon written approval of the Township in order to implement the decommissioning plan.