

Central Pines Regional Council Board of Delegates

MEETING AGENDA

Meeting Information

Board Name: Board of Delegates
Meeting Date: Wednesday, October 28, 2026
Meeting Time: 6:00 – 8:00 pm
Location: 4307 Emperor Boulevard, Durham, NC | Virtual
Chair: Susan Evans

Accessibility & Accommodation Notice: Central Pines Regional Council is committed to making all public meetings accessible. Persons with disabilities or who require language assistance are encouraged to contact the Staff Liaison at least 72 hours in advance. TTY users may call 711. Documents are available in alternative formats upon request.

Meeting Agenda

#	Agenda Item	Presenter/Lead	Time
1.	Call to Order		6:00 pm
	Call to Order	Susan Evans <i>Board Chair</i>	
	Roll Call	Beth Seidel <i>Board Clerk</i>	
	Declaration of Quorum	Susan Evans <i>Board Chair</i>	
	Get to Know CPRC	Susan Evans <i>Board Chair</i>	
2.	Review of Agenda		6:05 pm
	Review of Agenda <i>Chair will approve</i>	Susan Evans <i>Board Chair</i>	
3.	Presentations & Recognition		6:10 pm
	Establishment of the Center for Regional Excellence <i>Potential Action: None – Information Only</i>	Lee Worsley <i>Executive Director</i>	
4.	Public Hearing		
5.	CPRC Program Spotlight		6:30 pm
	Regional Plan Clearinghouse First Look <i>Potential Action: Provide Feedback</i>	Alana Keegan <i>Local Government Services Director</i> Grace Berry <i>Management Analyst</i>	

	Update on Central Pines Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) Policy Paper <i>Potential Action: None – Information Only</i>	Lee Worsley <i>Executive Director</i>	
6.	Business		7:00 pm
	Proposed 2027 Board of Delegates Meeting Schedule <i>Potential Action: Place on Consent Agenda</i>	Beth Seidel <i>Clerk to the Board</i>	
	Overview of Central Pines' Data Center Ordinance Template <i>Potential Action: None – Information Only</i>	Alana Keegan <i>Local Government Services Director</i>	
7.	Consent Agenda		7:20 pm
	Consent Agenda Items: a. <i>August 2026 Board Minutes</i> b. <i>Proposed 2027 Board of Delegates Meeting Schedule</i> c. <i>Budget Amendment, Resolution #2026-10-01</i>	Susan Evans <i>Board Chair</i>	
8.	Items Removed from Consent Agenda		
9.	Chair's Report		7:25 pm
	Chair's Report <i>Potential Action: None – Information Only</i>	Susan Evans <i>Board Chair</i>	
10.	Executive Director's Report		7:35 pm
	Executive Director's Report <i>Potential Action: None – Information Only</i>	Lee Worsley <i>Executive Director</i>	
11.	Around the Region		7:45 pm
12.	Other Business		
	Other Business <i>Potential Action:</i>	Susan Evans <i>Board Chair</i>	
13.	Adjournment		8:00 pm

Central Pines Regional Council Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Board of Delegates

Agenda Item Information

Agenda Item Title: Establishment of Center for Regional Excellence

Meeting Date: October 28 (Board of Delegates)

Agenda Location: Presentations/Recognition

Presenter(s): Lee Worsley, Executive Director

Recommendation: None - Information Only

Background Information

Overview/Summary <i>Use plain language, spell out acronyms, and assume the reader knows nothing about your topic.</i>	About eight years ago, the Triangle J Regional Corporation was formed as a 501(c)(3). The purpose of establishing a 501(c)(3) was to create an entity that could receive funding to further regional initiatives and projects. Opportunities for the 501(c)(3) have only recently materialized. The 2026-2029 Central Pines Strategic Plan also calls for CPRC to take a more active and visible role in regional thought leadership and planning. The Strategic Plan sets goals to enhance the capacity of CPRC's Regional Data Hub and includes strategies for developing both a long-range regional plan and a regional housing plan. Given the alignment of our data hub, thought leadership, and long-range planning efforts, this is the ideal time to launch the Central Pines Center for Regional Excellence. The Center will operate under the Central Pines brand and serve as the primary location for the organization's data, research, and regional planning initiatives. This approach will help local governments and stakeholders easily identify where this work is managed and will allow us to brand it in alignment with the Board's expectations for thought leadership and data initiatives. Simultaneously, CPRC staff engaged the Board of the 501(c)(3) (Triangle J Regional Corporation). On October 13, 2026, the Board took two key actions: 1) Renamed the 501(c)(3) as The Center for Regional Excellence to better align with our strategy, and 2) Transferred Board governance to the CPRC Executive Committee. These changes will streamline meetings and better
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	align the 501(c)(3)'s work with CPRC's Center for Regional Excellence, improving efficiency for elected officials. Finally, two exciting staffing opportunities have recently surfaced, making now a good time to reinvigorate the 501(c)(3) and reorganize our work. • The City of Raleigh and Central Pines have agreed to transfer the Raleigh iTeam to Central Pines Regional Council, effective January 1, 2027. The iTeam, funded by Bloomberg through Johns Hopkins University, comprises three staff members who will join Central Pines on that date. Their work on housing, data and workforce will broaden to a regional focus. • CPRC and the Triangle Trails Initiative have agreed to transfer their position to Central Pines, effective November 1, 2026. Funding will be provided through individual donations and corporate sponsorships via the 501(c)(3) (The Center). This transition will increase capacity and enable deeper coordination on greenways and trails with MPOs, RPOs, local governments, and the State DOT.
What communities in our region are impacted?	All communities in the Central Pines Region, as well as some communities outside our region, are impacted by the Center's formation and its work.
Funding (if applicable) <i>Explain any funding for this item, how it's acquired, allocated, etc.</i>	Funding comes from a variety of sources. Member dollars fund 50% of a Regional Data Strategist position. The Raleigh iTeam will be funded exclusively by Bloomberg funding. The Triangle Trails position will be funded exclusively by outside donations. Other work around regional long-range planning and data from other CPRC staff members is typically funded by member dollars.

Supporting Documents

Is there any supporting documentation?

- ☒ No
- ☐ Yes (If yes, please list the attachments below)

Central Pines Regional Council Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Board of Delegates

Agenda Item Information

Agenda Item Title: Regional Plan Clearinghouse First Look

Meeting Date: October 28 (Board of Delegates)

Agenda Location: CPRC Program Spotlight

Presenter(s): Alana Keegan, Local Government Services Director
Grace Berry, Management Analyst

Recommendation: Other (please list)
Provide feedback on first iteration

Background Information

Overview/Summary <i>Use plain language, spell out acronyms, and assume the reader knows nothing about your topic</i>	Every day, 145 new residents arrive in Central North Carolina. That makes our region the third fastest growing in the country, and by 2050 our 10-county area will add roughly 1.2 million more people, the equivalent of adding another Wake County. That's why Central Pines Regional Council is developing Connected Region, a blueprint for thoughtful growth to guide decisionmakers across the region. The initiative will provide a framework to help local governments work together so land use decisions can support thriving communities for both businesses and residents. Local governments across the region are already doing important planning work. With so many plans underway, there is a growing need to see how they fit together, and that is where the Regional Clearinghouse comes in. The Regional Clearinghouse is the first milestone in the Connected Region initiative to make coordination easier to see and envision. The site will house local and regional plans in one place so that elected officials, planners, and partners can view the region as a whole: where plans align, where they connect across boundaries, and where there are opportunities to collaborate. It will pair these plans with CPRC's regional data and analysis to give context to the information and highlight best practices. Today, staff will present the initial mock-up of the Clearinghouse.
What communities in our region are impacted?	All Central Pines Regional Council local governments will be included in the clearinghouse for applicable plans.
Funding (if applicable) <i>Explain any funding for this item, how it's acquired, allocated, etc.</i>	Currently, staff are working on this initiative using member investment dollars. Long-term data analysis, maintenance, and

	integration with the broader Connected Region planning effort will require additional funding sources.
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Supporting Documents

Is there any supporting documentation?

- ☒ No
- ☐ Yes (If yes, please list the attachments below)

Central Pines Regional Council Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Board of Delegates

Agenda Item Information

Agenda Item Title: Update on Central Pines MSA White Paper
Meeting Date: October 28 (Board of Delegates)
Agenda Location: CPRC Program Spotlight
Presenter(s): Lee Worsley, Executive Director
Recommendation: None - Information Only

Background Information

Overview/Summary <i>Use plain language, spell out acronyms, and assume the reader knows nothing about your topic</i>	Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) are federally designated regions defined as metropolitan areas based on specific national criteria. Local input does not influence these designations. Prior to the 2000 Census, our region was part of a single MSA. In the late 1990s, the Office of Management and Budget revised the criteria for MSA delineation, increasing the required commuting percentage between counties from 15% to 25%. As a result, the 2000 Census divided our region into two MSAs. Currently, our region includes two MSAs: the Raleigh-Cary MSA, which covers Wake, Johnston, and Franklin Counties, and the Durham-Chapel Hill MSA, which includes Durham, Orange, Chatham, and Person Counties. As the 2030 Census approaches, proposed rules for MSA delineation may be released for public comment in 2028. As part of the 2026-2029 Central Pines Strategic Plan, Focus Area 2, Connected Places’ first goal is to “Develop a coordinated regional long-range plan.” One strategy under that goal is for Central Pines to develop a White Paper to educate our region on how MSAs are designated and what steps the region could take if it would like to see a single MSA in the future. The White Paper will not recommend for or against a single or multiple MSAs. Instead, it will explain how MSAs are delineated, why our region currently has two MSAs, how MSAs impact federal funding, economic development, and private business, and outline possible steps toward a single MSA if desired.
What communities in our region are impacted?	All communities in the Central Pines Region, as well as some communities outside our region, are impacted by the MSA.

Funding (if applicable) <i>Explain any funding for this item, how it's acquired, allocated, etc.</i>	Developing an MSA White Paper is a first-year strategy in the Central Pines Strategic Plan. The Executive Director, Community and Economic Development Director, and a Planner II will dedicate time to this project during Fiscal Year 2026-27.
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Supporting Documents

Is there any supporting documentation?

- ☒ No
- ☐ Yes (If yes, please list the attachments below)

Central Pines Regional Council

Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Board of Delegates Meeting

Agenda Item Information

Agenda Item Title: Proposed 2027 Board of Delegates & Executive Committee Meeting Schedule

Meeting Date: October 28 (Board of Delegates)

Agenda Location: Business

Presenter(s): Beth Seidel, Clerk to the Board

Recommendation: Place on Consent Agenda

Background Information

Overview/Summary <i>Use plain language, spell out acronyms, and assume the reader knows nothing about your topic</i>	Attached is a proposed meeting schedule for the 2027 Board of Delegates and Executive Committee meetings. Staff requests that the Board review the proposed schedule and consider approval or provide feedback if there are any potential conflicts.
What communities in our region are impacted?	All CPRC communities.
Funding (if applicable) <i>Explain any funding for this item, how it's acquired, allocated, etc.</i>	N/a

Supporting Documents

Is there any supporting documentation?

- ☒ Yes (If yes, please list the attachments below)
 - 1) Proposed 2027 Meeting Schedule

2027 MEETING SCHEDULE

Board of Delegates & Executive Committee



Proposed October 28, 2026

January 27	Board of Delegates Meeting	Hybrid
February 24	Executive Committee Meeting	Virtual
March 24	Executive Committee Meeting	Virtual
April 28	Board of Delegates Meeting	Hybrid
May 26	Board of Delegates Meeting	Hybrid
June 30	Executive Committee Meeting	Virtual
July	No Meeting	
August 25	Board of Delegates Meeting	Hybrid
September 29	Executive Committee Meeting	Virtual
October 27	Board of Delegates Meeting	Hybrid
November 17	Executive Committee Meeting	Virtual
December 1	End of Year Celebration/Golden Pinecone Awards	In-Person

- All meetings will be held on the **4th Wednesday** (*unless otherwise noted)
- Board of Delegates Meetings:
 - All meetings will be in-person at the CPRC Office with a virtual option
 - Dinner will be served at 5:30 pm for those who choose to come in-person
 - Business Meeting will begin at **6:00 pm**
- Executive Committee Meetings will be held virtually at **6:00 pm**
- Please contact Beth Seidel, Clerk to the Board, with any questions at 919-558-2712 or bseidel@centralpinesnc.gov



Central Pines Regional Council Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Board of Delegates

Agenda Item Information

Agenda Item Title: Overview of Central Pines’ Data Center Ordinance Template

Meeting Date: October 28 (Board of Delegates)

Agenda Location: Business

Presenter(s): Alana Keegan, Local Government Services Director

Recommendation: None - Information Only

Background Information

Overview/Summary <i>Use plain language, spell out acronyms, and assume the reader knows nothing about your topic</i>	Over the past year, Central Pines Regional Council has brought together local governments to better understand and prepare for data center development in our region. As this issue becomes more important, our communities are working to learn about different types of data centers and how these projects might affect their residents and resources. Central Pines Regional Council staff will present results of this work: the CPRC Data Center Ordinance Template and a companion Community Use Guide. This template helps local governments review zoning considerations for data centers and provides best practices for either adding data centers as a new use or updating existing definitions and standards, all while staying compliant with state regulations and local authority. This template is not intended to be adopted as-is. Instead, communities can use it to decide the appropriate path forward, with vetted zoning language and guidance. The template does not promote or oppose data center development but is a tool so each community can make decisions that fit their values when considering data center applications.
What communities in our region are impacted?	All fifty local governments should be able to use and modify the template and guide to their own local context.
Funding (if applicable) <i>Explain any funding for this item, how it’s acquired, allocated, etc.</i>	This work was funded through Member Assessment dollars.

Supporting Documents

- Is there any supporting documentation?
- ☐ No
 - ☒ Yes (If yes, please list the attachments below)
 - Data Center Ordinance Template

DRAFT MODEL ORDINANCE

NC DATA CENTER UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE AMENDMENT DRAFT

TOWN OF [LOCAL GOVERNMENT NAME], NORTH CAROLINA



4307 Emperor Blvd., Suite 110 · Durham, NC 27703
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How to Use This Document

This draft ordinance provides a starting framework for local governments in the Central Pines region and across North Carolina considering how to address data center development through their development ordinances. It has been developed through best practice research, review of peer jurisdictions and model ordinances, applicable North Carolina statutes and regulations, technical and practitioner input, and the ongoing work of the Data Center Working Group convened by Central Pines Regional Council. The draft is intended to evolve as new research, technical guidance, and regulatory changes emerge and should be adapted to each community's existing development ordinances and local context.

North Carolina Legal Considerations: Communities should consider North Carolina's down-zoning requirements under N.C.G.S. § 160D-601(d) when adapting this model ordinance. These requirements were enacted through S.L. 2024-57 (S.B. 382). Down-zoning may include reducing the range of permitted uses or development density or making an existing use, structure, or site element nonconforming. Because existing zoning and development regulations vary by community, provisions in this model should be reviewed with the local government attorney before adoption to determine whether they could constitute a down-zoning or raise other questions of local authority. Where appropriate, communities may also consider whether certain project-specific measures are better addressed through conditions mutually agreed upon as part of a conditional zoning rather than as generally applicable ordinance requirements.

Bracketed text  indicates fields a local government must complete. This document is only a starting point for local deliberation and should be reviewed by the local government's attorney, planning staff, and relevant subject matter professionals prior to adoption.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

The following abbreviations appear throughout this ordinance. District designations (CB, I-1, I-2) reflect common North Carolina zoning classifications; local governments should substitute equivalent designations from their UDO where terminology differs.

Regulatory & Legal

N.C.G.S. - North Carolina General Statutes
ETJ - Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
UDO - Unified Development Ordinance
NCDOT - North Carolina Department of Transportation
NCDEQ - North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality
NCDAQ - North Carolina Division of Air Quality
EPA - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
CDC - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Zoning Districts

CB - Commercial Business
I-1 - Light Industrial
I-2 - Heavy Industrial

Permits & Processes

CZ - Conditional Zoning
TIA - Traffic Impact Analysis
SUP - Special Use Permit

Technical / Data Center

BESS - Battery Energy Storage System
IT - Information Technology
MW - Megawatt
MWh - Megawatt-hour
MGD - Million Gallons Per Day
PUE - Power Usage Effectiveness
WUE - Water Usage Effectiveness
CNEL - Community Noise Equivalent Level
dBA - A-weighted decibels
dBC - C-weighted decibels
dBZ - Unweighted (flat) decibels
EIFS - Exterior Insulation and Finish System

Standards & Codes

NFPA - National Fire Protection Association
INCE - Institute of Noise Control Engineering
ASHRAE - American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers

SECTION 1.**AUTHORITY, PURPOSE, INTENT, AND
DECOMMISSIONING****1.1 Statutory Authority**

This Ordinance is adopted pursuant to the authority granted to local governments in North Carolina under N.C.G.S. Chapter 160D (Local Government Land Development Regulation), including but not limited to the authority to adopt, amend, and enforce zoning regulations and use standards as part of the local government's Unified Development Ordinance.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this Ordinance is to establish use-specific standards for data centers to ensure that these facilities are sited, designed, constructed, and operated in a manner that:

- Protects the health, safety, and welfare of current and future residents;
- Minimizes adverse impacts on surrounding land uses, natural resources, and public infrastructure;
- Ensures compatibility with adopted land use plans, including the [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] comprehensive or land use plan
{insert specific community plan name here}
- Provides clear and predictable standards for applicants and decision-makers; and
- Addresses the unique operational characteristics of data centers, including energy consumption, water use, noise generation, and hazardous materials storage.

1.3 Intent

It is the intent of this Ordinance to recognize data centers as a distinct use category with operational characteristics that differ materially from traditional commercial or industrial uses. These standards are intended to be applied in conjunction with all other applicable provisions of the [LOCAL GOVERNMENT NAME + APPLICABLE DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE NAME(S)]. In the event of a conflict, the more restrictive provision shall apply unless this Ordinance expressly provides otherwise.

1.4 Changes in Data Center Tier

An expansion or modification that would increase a data center's Ultimate Electrical Demand above the threshold of its approved tier shall not be considered a minor modification. The proposed expansion or modification shall be reviewed under the standards and approval process applicable to the new tier.

1.5 Decommissioning and Reuse

Some jurisdictions outside North Carolina require bonds or other financial assurance to cover decommissioning costs. North Carolina local governments should consult with their attorney before imposing a financial assurance requirement for a data center. Depending on the approval mechanism and applicable statutory authority, decommissioning commitments may instead be addressed through mutually agreed-upon conditions associated with a conditional zoning.

All data center applications shall include a decommissioning and reuse plan addressing, at minimum:

- A.** A proposed timeline and procedures for the removal of high-hazard infrastructure, including fuel storage systems, battery systems, cooling chemicals, and electrical equipment;
- B.** Procedures for the safe removal, disposal, or reuse of equipment, materials, and hazardous substances;
- C.** Proposed plans for reuse, redevelopment, or restoration of the site following cessation of data center operations; and
- D.** Any additional decommissioning measures required as part of an applicable development approval.

SECTION 2.

DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this Ordinance, the following terms shall have the meanings below. Terms not defined should be interpreted consistently with their common meaning or, where applicable, as defined elsewhere in the [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] [APPLICABLE DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE NAME]. In the event of a conflict between a definition in this Ordinance and a definition elsewhere in the [APPLICABLE DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE NAME], the definition in this Ordinance shall control.

Term	Definition
Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) & Energy Storage System	(BESS) A system composed of electrochemical devices that stores electrical energy and discharges it on demand. Includes lithium-ion, lead-acid, sodium-ion, solid-state, and other chemistries. (ESS) Equipment and associated infrastructure located on-site that generates, stores, converts, or manages energy for use by the data center or delivery to the electric grid. This may include, but is not limited to, battery energy storage systems, generators, solar photovoltaic systems, fuel cells, combined heat and power systems, and other distributed energy resources.
Data Center	A facility used primarily for the storage, management, processing, and/or transmission of digital data, housing computer or network equipment, servers, and related components, including but not limited to facilities used for cryptocurrency mining or other blockchain-based computational operations. The facility may include air handlers, backup power generators, cooling systems and water storage, utility substations, and other associated infrastructure to support sustained operations
Data Center, Tier 1 (Standard)	A data center including an enterprise/internal facility accessory to primary business use, or a small or regional colocation facility with an Ultimate Electrical Demand of less than 50 megawatts (MW).
Data Center, Tier 2 (Large)	A data center including a large colocation facility or multi-building campus with an Ultimate Electrical Demand of 50 MW or greater but less than 100 MW.
Data Center, Tier 3 (Hyperscale)	A large-scale hyperscale or AI/cloud-computing data center campus, owned and/or operated by a single entity (or its affiliates), with an Ultimate Electrical Demand of 100 megawatts (MW) or greater.
Data Center Electrical Substation	A facility used for transformation, transmission, and/or switching of voltages to distribution voltages, serving a data center on the same or adjacent site or across a road right-of-way.

Term	Definition
Data Center Campus	One or more Data Center facilities located on contiguous or nearby properties that function as a coordinated development through shared electrical infrastructure, utilities, access, ownership, operation, or a common development plan.
Footcandle	A unit of illuminance equal to one lumen per square foot.
IT Load	The total electrical power, measured in megawatts (MW), used by a data center's information technology equipment, excluding power consumed by cooling, lighting, and other facility infrastructure. IT Load is reported in the electrical load study (Section 5.5); it is not the metric used to determine tier classification under Section 2 (see "Ultimate Electrical Demand").
Power Usage Effectiveness (PUE)	A ratio of total facility energy consumption to IT equipment energy consumption. A PUE of 1.0 is perfectly efficient, with 1.5 being industry average.
Sensitive Receptor	Schools, preschools, daycare centers, in-home daycares, health facilities (hospitals, long-term care facilities, emergency services facilities, assisted living facilities, retirement and nursing homes), community centers, places of worship, playgrounds, libraries, parks, campgrounds, prisons, dormitories, and any residential structure.
Thermal Runaway	An uncontrolled, self-sustaining exothermic reaction within a battery cell that can propagate through adjacent cells, generating heat, fire, or explosion risk.
Ultimate Electrical Demand	The maximum total electrical demand, in megawatts (MW), that a data center facility is designed to serve at full build-out, including information technology equipment, cooling, and all other facility infrastructure loads. Ultimate Electrical Demand shall be documented in the electrical load study required under Section 5.5 and is the metric used to determine tier classification under this Section 2 (Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3).
Water Usage Effectiveness (WUE)	A metric calculated as the total water consumed by a data center (in liters) divided by the IT equipment energy consumed (in kilowatt-hours). Lower values reflect greater efficiency.

SECTION 3.

APPLICABILITY AND USE CLASSIFICATION

3.1 Applicability

The provisions of this Ordinance shall apply to all data centers proposed within the jurisdictional limits of [LOCAL GOVERNMENT], including those located within areas subject to extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) as authorized under N.C.G.S. § 160D-202.

3.2 Use Classifications and Permitted Zoning Districts

The zoning districts and approval processes below are examples, not requirements. Each community should adapt this section to its own zoning districts, development review processes, and the Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 definitions in Section 2. All data centers remain subject to the applicable supplemental use standards in Section 5.

Position of this Model Ordinance

By-right approval is not recommended. Central Pines Regional Council recommends that data centers not be permitted by right in any tier. Data centers vary widely in size, power demand, water use, noise, and backup generation. By-right approval provides no public hearing and no discretion to address site-specific impacts.

No legal recommendation is made between conditional zoning and a special use permit. Central Pines Regional Council does not make a legal recommendation between conditional zoning (a legislative decision under N.C.G.S. § 160D-703) and a special use permit (a quasi-judicial decision under N.C.G.S. § 160D-705). Each process carries different legal requirements, levels of public participation, and litigation risks. The appropriate choice depends on the community's existing development ordinance, its adopted plans, staff and board capacity, and the advice of its local government attorney. The comparison and scenarios below are provided to support that local decision.

Use Scenarios and Risks

Scenario A: By-Right Approval (Not Recommended)

Example: A Tier 2 data center is proposed on an I-2 parcel next to a neighborhood. Staff confirm that the site plan meets setbacks, buffers, and noise modeling requirements, and must approve it.

Risks to the public:

- Residents have no hearing and may not learn of the project until construction begins.
- Impacts the ordinance did not anticipate cannot be addressed, such as cumulative generator noise, water demand during drought, or later expansion into a higher tier.

Risks to the local government:

- The local government has no discretion to deny or negotiate.
- Once approved, the project may obtain vested rights. Tightening standards afterward may raise down-zoning concerns under N.C.G.S. § 160D-601(d), as amended by S.L. 2024-57.

Scenario B: Conditional Zoning

Example: A Tier 3 hyperscale campus requests rezoning to I-2-CZ. Through negotiation, the applicant agrees to conditions on phasing, decommissioning commitments, reclaimed water for cooling, and continuous noise monitoring.

Best suited for: communities that want broad public input, flexibility to tailor conditions to a specific site, and the ability to deny a request on policy grounds.

Risks to the public:

- Every condition must be voluntarily agreed to by the applicant. The board cannot impose protections the applicant refuses.
- Outcomes depend on negotiation and may vary from project to project.

Risks to the local government:

- A rezoning that is inconsistent with adopted plans, or that benefits one parcel without a reasonable basis, may be challenged as illegal spot zoning or contract zoning.
- Conditions must relate to the impacts of the development and to the local government's statutory authority.
- The decision may become politically contested.

Scenario C: Special Use Permit

Example: Tier 1 and Tier 2 data centers are allowed in the I-1 and I-2 districts with a special use permit. The board holds an evidentiary hearing, and the applicant presents expert noise, traffic, and utility studies showing that the ordinance standards are met.

Best suited for: communities that prefer clear, objective standards applied consistently to every applicant, and that already use special use permits for comparable heavy industrial uses.

Risks to the public:

- Residents' general concerns and opposition cannot, by themselves, justify denial. Lay opinion on matters such as property values or traffic generally is not competent evidence.
- Participation is more formal, and opponents may need their own experts to be effective.

Risks to the local government:

- If the applicant presents competent evidence that the standards are met, a denial without contrary competent evidence is likely to be overturned on appeal.
- Quasi-judicial procedures are strict: sworn testimony, no ex parte communication, conflict-of-interest rules for board members, and written findings of fact. Procedural errors are a common basis for reversal.
- Vague or subjective standards are difficult to defend.

Comparison of Approval Pathways

	By-Right (Not Recommended)	Conditional Zoning (CZ)	Special Use Permit (SUP)
Type of decision	Administrative	Legislative	Quasi-judicial
Who decides	Staff	Governing board, after Planning Board recommendation	Governing board or Board of Adjustment, as designated in the UDO
Public hearing	None	Legislative public hearing; anyone may speak	Evidentiary hearing with sworn testimony; participation limited to parties with standing
Basis for decision	Whether the application meets the written standards	Board's policy judgment and consistency with adopted plans (§ 160D-605)	Whether competent, material, and substantial evidence shows the standards are met
Conditions	None beyond the ordinance	Must be mutually agreed upon by the applicant and the board	Board may impose reasonable conditions within its authority
Can the board deny?	No, if the standards are met	Yes, with broad discretion	Only if the evidence shows a standard is not met
Appeal or challenge	Appeal to the Board of Adjustment	Court challenge to the ordinance's validity (e.g., spot zoning, arbitrary action)	Appeal to Superior Court on the hearing record

Classification Table

Data centers shall be classified and permitted as follows:

Use Type	Permitted By-Right	Conditional Zoning or Special Use Permit (select one locally)
Tier 1 (Standard) Data Center	<i>Not recommended</i>	I-1
Tier 2 (Large) Data Center	<i>Not recommended</i>	I-2
Tier 3 (Hyperscale) Data Center	<i>Not recommended</i>	I-2

NOTE: Local governments should review and adjust permitted districts to align with local zoning maps and district classifications. The choice between conditional zoning and a special use permit should be made with the local government attorney. KEY - All data centers remain subject to all applicable supplemental use standards in Section 5.

SECTION 4.**APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS****4.1 Pre-Application Conference**

Prior to submission of any application for a data center, the applicant shall attend a pre-application conference with [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] Planning staff and relevant departmental representatives, including Public Works, Fire, Building Inspector and Town Engineer. The purpose of the pre-application conference is to identify applicable requirements, review proposed infrastructure impacts, and establish the scope of required technical studies.

4.2 Required Submissions**Advisory Note: State Law and Pending Legislation**

North Carolina local governments should review these application requirements in light of existing State law, including S.L. 2024-57 and G.S. 160D-601, as well as any subsequent legislation affecting local development regulations. S.L. 2024-57 amended G.S. 160D-601 to limit a local government's ability to initiate certain zoning map amendments and text amendments that would reduce the development or use rights of affected property without the property owner's consent. Because those limitations may affect how local governments adopt or apply new development regulations, local governments should consult their attorney when incorporating this model language into an existing ordinance.

The Ratepayer Protection Act was proposed during the 2025 - 2026 legislative session but has not passed and is not currently law. If enacted, the legislation could establish additional state-level requirements that local governments would need to incorporate into the review and approval of new data center projects.

As proposed, the Act would require applicants to complete a sound assessment addressing residential units and schools within 500 feet of the data center property boundary before approval of a rezoning, special exception, conditional or special use permit, or building permit. It would also require applicants to attest that the facility will use a closed-loop water or liquid cooling system designed to minimize water consumption to the maximum extent possible. Because the legislation remains pending, these provisions should not be treated as current state requirements. Local governments should continue to monitor the legislation and, if it is enacted, review local application requirements and approval procedures for consistency with the new state requirements.

Required Submissions

Applications for a Data Center shall include the information necessary to determine compliance with the applicable requirements of this ordinance and [LOCAL GOVERNMENT]'s existing development review requirements.

Where [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] has adopted requirements for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for major development projects pursuant to G.S. 113A-8, a Data Center meeting the established

criteria for such review shall submit an EIS in accordance with those requirements. Any EIS requirement shall be established by ordinance and applied consistently to qualifying development projects.

At a minimum, the applicant shall provide as applicable:

1. Water and wastewater information identifying anticipated average and peak demand, anticipated wastewater generation and characteristics, proposed cooling methodology, and any infrastructure improvements necessary to serve the development. Any additional capacity or impact study shall be required in accordance with [LOCAL GOVERNMENT]'s generally applicable utility review requirements.
2. A site plan prepared in accordance with [LOCAL GOVERNMENT]'s existing development review requirements demonstrating compliance with applicable development standards.
3. Existing conditions information sufficient to identify relevant site characteristics, including topography, drainage, existing utilities, easements, structures, impervious surfaces, and adjacent land uses. Existing surveys or site documentation required through the local government's development review process may be used to satisfy this requirement.

4.3 Review and Approval Process

- A. All data center applications shall be processed in accordance with the applicable review procedure set forth in the [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] Unified Development Ordinance and N.C.G.S. Chapter 160D.
- B. Tier 3 (Hyperscale) Where conditional rezoning is used for a data center, conditions shall be mutually agreed upon by the applicant and the local government in accordance with N.C.G.S. § 160D-703. Conditions may address operational performance standards, phasing requirements, infrastructure improvements, monitoring, and reporting obligations.

SECTION 5.

SUPPLEMENTAL USE STANDARDS

The following standards shall apply to all data centers unless a specific standard is designated for a particular use type. In the event of conflict with any other provision of the [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] Unified Development Ordinance, the more restrictive standard applies.

5.0 Tiered Standards Overview

Data centers are classified into three cumulative tiers based on Ultimate Electrical Demand at full build-out (see Section 2). Each tier carries forward every requirement of the tier(s) below it, in addition to the requirements specific to that tier. The table below summarizes the standards in this Section 5, and the reporting requirements in Section 6, scale by tier; the operative standard in each case is the corresponding numbered subsection, not this summary table.

Tier	Ultimate Electrical Demand	Typical Facility	Additional Requirements Triggered
Tier 1 (Standard)	Less than 50 MW	Enterprise/internal facility; small or regional colocation facility	- Standard UDO setbacks and dimensional standards (Section 5.2) - Mechanical equipment screening (Section 5.4.3) - Base UDO noise standards (Section 5.4.1) - Landscape buffer along adjacent residential/sensitive-use boundaries (Section 5.3) - Generator testing restricted to approved weekday daytime hours (Section 5.4.4)

Tier	Ultimate Electrical Demand	Typical Facility	Additional Requirements Triggered
Tier 2 (Large)	50 MW – less than 100 MW	Large colocation facility; multi-building campus	All Tier 1 requirements, plus: - Acoustic engineer's report using ISO 9613 modeling (Section 5.4.2) - Enhanced Electrical Load Impact Study (Section 5.5) - Emergency generator and fuel-storage plan (Section 5.4.4) - Enhanced noise study addressing cumulative mechanical equipment and generator noise (Section 5.4.2) - Enhanced screening of rooftop and ground-mounted equipment (Section 5.4.3) - Construction Traffic Management Plan (Section 5.8) - Lighting plan addressing nighttime glare and spillover (Section 5.11) - Cooling and Water Demand Plan (Section 5.6) - Decommissioning and Site Restoration Plan (Section 1.5)
Tier 3 (Hyperscale)	100 MW or greater	Large-scale hyperscale or AI/cloud computing campus	All Tier 2 requirements, plus: - Water Use and Cooling System Plan subject to Water Resources review (Section 5.6) - Annual compliance reporting for electrical demand, noise, and water use (Section 6.1) - Comprehensive utility capacity and infrastructure impact analysis (Sections 5.5 and 5.6) - Evaluation/use of reclaimed or non-potable water for cooling where feasible (Section 5.6) - Independent third-party review of electrical, water, noise, and environmental studies (Section 5.11.F) - Advanced noise mitigation and continuous noise monitoring (Section 5.4.2.F) - Enhanced tree canopy preservation/mitigation (Section 5.3) - Air-quality/emissions assessment for emergency generators (Section 5.11.E) - Enhanced emergency generator operational restrictions (Section 5.4.4.E) - Financial assurance for decommissioning and site restoration (Section 1.5)

5.1 Site Area and Minimum Lot Size

Site area needs will vary based on the scale and design of the facility, infrastructure needs, applicable setbacks and buffers, and the characteristics of the proposed site. Data centers shall comply with the minimum lot size and dimensional requirements of the applicable zoning district, together with the supplemental standards of this Ordinance.

NOTE: This model does not recommend a minimum lot size for data centers. Communities considering additional site area requirements should evaluate local conditions and consult with their attorney regarding applicable North Carolina law and potential impacts on existing development rights

5.2 Setbacks

Minimum setbacks shall be measured from the nearest exterior wall, ground-mounted mechanical equipment, or other applicable facility component to the property line or use identified below. For an on-site electrical substation, the setback shall be measured from the nearest substation equipment or enclosure to the applicable property line.

For an on-site electrical substation, the setback is measured from the nearest substation equipment or enclosure to the applicable property line.

NOTE: Setback standards should be reviewed against the local government's existing UDO and evaluated based on local conditions. Where an existing UDO already establishes an applicable setback, the local government should determine whether an additional data center-specific standard is needed. Bracketed values require local determination.

Setback From	Tier 1 (Standard)	Tier 2 (Large)	Tier 3 (Hyperscale)
Front yard (street right-of-way)	100 ft	150 ft	200 ft
Side and rear property line	100 ft	150 ft	300 ft
Residential zoning district or use	300 ft	500 ft	1,000 ft
Sensitive Receptor	300 ft	500 ft	1,000 ft
Electrical substation (on-site)	50 ft	100 ft	150 ft

NOTE: Setback standards need to be evaluated by the local government in context of the specific local conditions.

5.3 Buffers and Landscaping

- A. All data centers shall provide a Type [B/C] landscape buffer along all property lines adjacent to existing residential zoning or residential uses”
- B. Buffers shall be installed in the first phase of construction. Where phased development is proposed, perimeter buffers adjacent to public rights-of-way and residential uses shall be established prior to any site disturbance activity.
- C. Landscaping within required buffers shall meet the following standards: **Canopy trees.** Provide three (3) canopy trees per one hundred (100) linear feet of buffer, spaced no more than thirty (30) feet apart. Each canopy tree shall reach a mature height of at least sixty (60) feet. **Evergreen understory trees.** Provide fourteen (14) evergreen understory trees per one hundred (100) linear feet of buffer, spaced no more than ten (10) feet apart. Each tree shall reach a mature height of at least eighteen (18) feet. **Shrubs.** Provide twelve (12) shrubs per one hundred (100) linear feet of buffer. Shrubs shall be planted adjacent to the property line, outside the tree line, and shall reach a mature height of at least three (3) feet. **Security fence screening.** Where a fence includes barbed wire, concertina wire, razor wire, or similar security features, a continuous row of evergreen landscaping may replace the evergreen understory tree requirement. The landscaping shall consist entirely of evergreen species, be planted within fifteen (15) feet of the fence on the side facing adjacent properties, and be designed to reach at least the height of the fence within five (5) years after installation.

5.4 Noise Standards

5.4.1 Performance Standards

No data center shall cause sound levels to exceed the following limits, measured both (a) at the property line and (b) at the receiving property identified in the table below, by a qualified acoustic professional. These standards apply uniformly regardless of the cooling technology employed (air-cooled, liquid-cooled, immersion, or other), since all rejected-heat systems rely on some form of air movement and remain subject to the same standards.

Receiving Property	Max dBA (A-weighted)	Max dBC (C-weighted)
Sensitive Receptor	[Pending - see Advisory Note below]	[Pending - see Advisory Note below]
Residential use or district	[Pending - see Advisory Note below]	65 dBC
Non-residential use or district	[Pending - see Advisory Note below]	[Pending - see Advisory Note below]

The standards of this Section 5.4.1 shall be structured by time period (day, evening, and night), consistent with standard noise-ordinance practice. The specific day/evening/night numeric limits are pending confirmation with the Town’s acoustic consultant and are not yet set in this draft; see the Advisory Note

at the end of Section 5.4. For a facility that operates continuously but does not maintain a steady-state load (for example, an AI or high-performance-computing facility with fluctuating compute demand), the facility shall be designed to meet the applicable nighttime limit at all hours of operation, since load-driven fluctuation can otherwise cause noise emissions to exceed nighttime limits even where daytime average levels are compliant.

In addition to the dBA and dBC standards above, the applicant shall submit manufacturer octave-band (dBZ) data for major noise-generating equipment as supporting documentation within the noise study required under Section 5.4.2. Octave-band/dBZ data shall inform the tonal-noise analysis required below and equipment-selection review, but is not, standing alone, a compliance metric under this Section.

Tonal Noise. The applicant shall evaluate tonal noise (for example, electrical hum) using octave-band analysis consistent with accepted ANSI tonality methodology. Because tonal characteristics may not be fully known at the time of pre-construction modeling, tonal verification shall be performed as part of the post-construction noise study required under Section 5.4.2.B. Where a steady tonal component is confirmed, a tonal adjustment (penalty) shall be applied to the measured noise level, and the adjusted level shall be applied retroactively to determine compliance with the applicable limit under Section 5.4.1.

5.4.2 Noise Studies

Advisory Note: Communities should review these requirements alongside the noise standards applied to other industrial or similarly situated uses. Where data centers are subject to additional study or modeling requirements, communities should consider whether those requirements are supported by the characteristics of the use, including continuous mechanical equipment, cooling systems, and backup power generation, and are applied consistently with similarly situated uses.

Communities should review each standard in this model ordinance with their local government attorney before adoption to ensure it falls within the scope of local authority under N.C.G.S. Chapter 160D, including §§ 160D-701 and 160D-702, and other applicable law. Standards should address legitimate land use impacts and be applied consistently with applicable zoning and development regulations.

- A.** A pre-construction noise study shall be submitted with the development application. The study shall be prepared by an INCE Board Certified Engineer and shall use ISO 9613 sound propagation modeling the required methodology under this Section, to the exclusion of alternative modeling methodologies to evaluate all exterior mechanical equipment (including but not limited to cooling towers, air-cooled chillers, air handling units, backup generators, and/or any onsite power generation equipment) and confirm compliance with Section 5.4.1. The model shall account for the total number of generators and other major noise-generating units proposed on site, and shall separately isolate and report the noise contribution (“delta”) attributable to backup power generation equipment operating at full load.
- B.** A post-construction noise study, including the same elements as section 5.4.2A, shall be conducted prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy. If any standards are exceeded, the applicant shall implement corrective measures prior to occupancy.

- C. The [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] may require a third-party peer review of any noise study, at the applicant's expense.
- D. As-built noise studies may also be required by the [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] upon complaint or at any time during operation.
- E. **Tier 2 (Large) and Tier 3 (Hyperscale) - Cumulative Noise Analysis:** In addition to the ISO 9613 modeling required under Section 5.4.2.A for all tiers, the applicant shall evaluate cumulative noise from all mechanical equipment and emergency generators operating simultaneously at full load, at all applicable receptors identified in the report.
- F. **Tier 3 (Hyperscale) - Ongoing Compliance Monitoring:** The operator shall implement one of the following ongoing compliance-monitoring approaches, subject to [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] approval at site plan review: (i) continuous noise monitoring, with permanent monitoring equipment installed and maintained at locations approved by [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] and data made available to [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] upon request; or (ii) periodic noise monitoring conducted no less than annually by a qualified acoustic professional, with results submitted to [LOCAL GOVERNMENT]. Under either approach, the operator shall implement additional noise mitigation measures where monitoring identifies an exceedance of the applicable standards.

5.4.3 Equipment, Placement and Shielding

- A. All sound-generating mechanical equipment shall be setback from property lines by no less than the distances required for principal structures under Section 5.2.
- B. To the maximum extent practicable, sound-generating equipment shall be located on the interior of the site, positioned behind principal structures to provide natural sound shielding.
- C. Parapet walls shall screen all rooftop mechanical equipment. Parapet wall height shall be at least as tall as rooftop mechanical equipment being screened; however, the combined height of the building and parapet wall shall not exceed the maximum building height established in [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] UDO Section []. Where the inclusion of a parapet wall would cause a building to exceed the maximum permitted building height, the height of the principal structure shall be reduced accordingly.
- D. **Tier 2 (Large) and Tier 3 (Hyperscale) Enhanced Screening:** Rooftop and ground-mounted mechanical equipment shall be screened with enhanced materials and/or landscaping beyond the base requirements of this Section, as determined through site plan review, to further reduce visibility from public rights-of-way and adjacent residential uses.

5.4.4 Generator Testing and Maintenance

- A. Generator testing and scheduled maintenance shall be limited to the hours of [10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.], Monday through Friday.
- B. Emergency generator operation during power outages is exempt from these time restrictions.
- C. The applicant shall maintain a log of all generator operations (testing, maintenance, and emergency) and make such records available to [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] upon request.

- D. Tier 2 (Large) and Tier 3 (Hyperscale) Emergency Generator and Fuel-Storage Plan:** The applicant shall submit an emergency generator and fuel-storage plan identifying generator capacity, run hours, fuel type and storage volume, spill containment, and refueling logistics.
- E. Tier 3 (Hyperscale) Enhanced Operational Restrictions:** [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] may impose additional restrictions on generator testing frequency, duration, and permissible sound levels beyond the base standards in this Section 5.4, based on the scale of on-site generation capacity and proximity to sensitive receptors.

5.5 Energy Consumption

- A.** Prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy, the applicant shall provide written verification from the applicable electric utility confirming that adequate supply capacity is available and that the proposed connection will not adversely impact grid reliability for other customers in the service area.
- B.** An electrical load study shall be submitted with the development application, detailing the anticipated diversified load and peak demand for both summer and winter seasons.
- C.** Where a data center proposes construction of an on-site electrical substation, the substation shall comply with Section 5.7 of this Ordinance.

5.6 Water and Wastewater

Wastewater and Stormwater Management

1. Written Verification from Service Providers

The Applicant has obtained written verification from each applicable service provider, attached as listed below:

Service	Provider	Exhibit	Date
Wastewater collection and treatment	[Provider name]	[]	[]
Water supply	[Provider name]	[]	[]
Stormwater (if a public system or MS4 receives site runoff)	[Provider name]	[]	[]

Each verification letter must state, in the provider's own determination, that capacity sufficient in size and capacity is or will be made available. It must also state that the project's requirements can be safely accommodated without adverse effects on the availability, reliability, quality, cost, or safety of service to other customers.

The Applicant does not make this determination itself. Where a provider's verification is conditional, the conditions are listed in Section 7.

2. Wastewater Sources and Projected Flows

The following projections are based on [engineering basis, e.g., design cooling load, equipment specifications, employee count] and were prepared by [firm/PE].

Wastewater Stream	Description	Avg. Daily Flow (gpd)	Max. Daily Flow (gpd)	Proposed Disposition
Equipment cooling	[Cooling tower blowdown / closed-loop drain-down / none if air-cooled]	[]	[]	[]
Humidity maintenance	[Humidifier or evaporative system blowdown]	[]	[]	[]
Process wastewater	[Water treatment reject, filter backwash, wash-down]	[]	[]	[]
Sanitary wastewater	[Domestic use, approx. X employees]	[]	[]	[]

3. Characteristics and Pretreatment of Non-Domestic Wastewater

[Describe expected characteristics, e.g., elevated total dissolved solids, temperature, residual water treatment chemicals.]

Non-domestic wastewater will be managed through [describe pretreatment, e.g., equalization, pH adjustment, temperature control, biocide deactivation] before discharge. The goal is compliance with:

- the receiving system's sewer use ordinance and local limits;
- the General Pretreatment Regulations at 40 CFR Part 403; and
- the North Carolina pretreatment rules at 15A NCAC 02H .0900.

Safety Data Sheets for water treatment chemicals will be given to the wastewater provider on request and before any change in chemical use.

4. Stormwater Run-On and Run-Off

Run-on. Off-site stormwater entering the site will be [diverted / conveyed / managed] by [describe measures].

Construction phase. Where land disturbance is one acre or more, the project will comply with the Sedimentation Pollution Control Act through an approved erosion and sedimentation control plan. It will also obtain coverage under NPDES Construction Stormwater General Permit NCG010000. The plan will be reviewed by [NCDEQ Division of Energy, Mineral, and Land Resources / the delegated local erosion control program].

Post-construction. Run-off will be managed through [describe SCMs] in accordance with applicable state post-construction stormwater requirements and [jurisdiction]'s stormwater ordinance.

Industrial stormwater. [Describe industrial stormwater permit coverage, if any is required, or state why none applies.]

5. Permits and Approvals (as applicable)

The Applicant will obtain the following before the activities they govern begin:

Permit / Approval	Issuing Authority	Applicable?	Status
Industrial User Pretreatment Permit	Local POTW control authority, or NCDEQ DWR where no approved local program exists	[Y/N]	[]
Sewer extension / connection permit	[NCDEQ DWR or delegated local program]	[Y/N]	[]
NPDES individual wastewater permit (direct discharge to surface waters)	NCDEQ Division of Water Resources	[Y/N]	[]
Non-discharge permit (reuse, land application)	NCDEQ Division of Water Resources	[Y/N]	[]
Erosion & sedimentation control plan approval	NCDEQ DEMLR or delegated local program	[Y/N]	[]
NPDES Construction Stormwater (NCG010000)	NCDEQ DEMLR	[Y/N]	[]
Post-construction stormwater permit	[State or local authority]	[Y/N]	[]
Water withdrawal registration (if self-supplied ≥100,000 gpd)	Environmental Management Commission, through NCDEQ	[Y/N]	[]

6. Monitoring, Spill Prevention, and Contingency

- Flow metering and monitoring of non-domestic discharges, as required by the applicable permit
- Secondary containment for water treatment chemicals
- A contingency plan for upset conditions, including [on-site holding capacity / hauling to a permitted facility]

7. Required Improvements

Select one.

- The provider verifications in Section 1 state that no improvements to public infrastructure are required to serve the project.
- The provider verifications identify the following required improvements: [list]. Under [agreement name and date, Exhibit ____], these improvements will be [funded by the Applicant / funded as

described in the agreement]. They will be in place before the project begins operation. The agreement provides that existing customers will not bear additional cost for these improvements.

5.7 Electrical Substations and Infrastructure

Advisory Note: Communities should review existing development ordinance standards for utility infrastructure and accessory uses before incorporating this section. Where substations or related infrastructure are already regulated, those provisions should be referenced or used to avoid duplicating or conflicting requirements.

- A. On-site electrical substations serving a data center shall meet the applicable setback established in Section 5.2.
- B. On-site electrical substations should be located to the side or rear of the principal building where feasible and should not be located adjacent to public rights-of-way.
- C. Substations shall be screened from public rights-of-way and adjacent residential properties with a minimum [8]-foot-tall opaque wall, year-round vegetative screening, or a combination of the two.
- D. Associated utility infrastructure, including transformer pads and switchgear, shall not be located within a required buffer yard unless otherwise permitted by the [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] UDO.

5.8 Traffic

- A. A Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) or trip generation letter shall be required when a proposed data center meets the applicable TIA threshold established in the [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] UDO or other adopted local policy. Where no local threshold exists, [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] may establish a threshold based on facility scale, square footage, anticipated employment, or another locally appropriate measure. The scope of any required analysis shall be coordinated with [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] Planning staff, the applicant's traffic engineer, and NCDOT for facilities served by state-maintained roadways.
- B. Roadway improvements, turn lanes, signal modifications, or other operational improvements identified through an applicable TIA shall be implemented in accordance with existing [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] and NCDOT requirements.
- C. For large-scale or hyperscale data centers, a construction traffic management plan may be required prior to grading to address routing, scheduling, road protection, and coordination with [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] Public Works and Police.

Community Note: This section is not intended to create a second TIA requirement where a community's existing UDO or adopted policy already addresses traffic impact analysis. Communities should use their existing standards and only add data center-specific requirements where a gap exists.

5.9 Architectural Design Standards

- A. All data center principal buildings shall comply with [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] UDO Article [9] - Design Standards as applicable, as well as the standards below.
- B. Building design should approximate the appearance of commercial office or institutional buildings. Large unbroken expanses of blank wall are prohibited on any facade visible from a public right-of-way.
- C. Approved exterior materials include brick, stone, glass, architectural metal panels, and pre-cast concrete with textured or patterned surface treatment. Unfinished concrete block, corrugated metal, and EIFS (without textured application) are prohibited on street-facing facades. (May not need)

5.10 Hazardous Materials and Safety

- A. All electrical equipment shall be housed in a pre-engineered, electrically grounded, metal-encased structure with a minimum 1-hour fire resistance rating.
- B. Any Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) shall comply with NFPA Standard 855, "Installation of Stationary Energy Storage Systems," and shall include fire suppression systems specifically designed for battery storage. BESS units shall be set back from all sensitive receptors, schools, daycare centers, hospitals, and residential uses by no less than [500] feet or as otherwise determined through a hazard analysis acceptable to the [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] Fire Marshal.
- C. Diesel fuel storage tanks and associated infrastructure shall comply with all applicable NFPA, North Carolina Fire Code, and NC Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) requirements. Spill containment berms, impermeable barriers, and secondary containment systems should be installed for all above-ground fuel storage.
- D. A hazardous materials management plan shall be submitted with the development application, identifying all hazardous materials and chemicals proposed for on-site use or storage, quantities, storage locations, handling and disposal methods, and emergency response procedures. The plan shall be reviewed and approved by the [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] Fire Marshal.
- E. The applicant shall coordinate with the [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] Fire Department and Police Department prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy to establish pre-incident plans, access protocols, and emergency response procedures specific to the facility.
- F. Adequate on-site fire flow and water storage shall be provided as determined by the Fire Marshal and the [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] engineer. Fire suppression water runoff containment systems shall be installed to prevent contamination of stormwater, groundwater, or public waterways.

5.11 Environmental Impacts

Advisory Note: Environmental requirements will vary by community based on local conditions, applicable state requirements, and existing ordinance provisions. Communities should review the environmental impacts associated with data center development within their jurisdiction, including air quality, potential ground contamination, stormwater and process wastewater, water supply and watershed protection, and other locally relevant environmental concerns. Duplication of requirements already addressed by state law or existing local ordinances must be avoided. Where an environmental impact is already adequately regulated, communities should consider referencing the applicable requirement rather than creating a separate data center-specific standard.

- A. Air Quality:** Onsite emergency generators shall comply with applicable U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and North Carolina Division of Air Quality (NCDAQ) emission standards.
- B. Ground Contamination:** Applicants shall prepare and submit a site contamination prevention plan addressing the storage, use, and spill response for chemicals, refrigerants, coolants, fuels, and other potentially hazardous materials used or stored on site.
- C. Stormwater and Process Wastewater:** All impervious surfaces shall comply with [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] stormwater ordinance requirements. Cooling tower blowdown and process wastewater shall not be discharged to stormwater infrastructure except as permitted by applicable state and local requirements.
- D. Water Supply Watersheds:** Development located within a designated water supply watershed shall comply with all applicable state and local watershed protection requirements, including [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] watershed protection ordinance provisions.
- E. Enhanced Air Quality Review (Tier 3 - Hyperscale):** In addition to the base emergency generator emissions compliance required above, Tier 3 (Hyperscale) facilities shall submit an air-quality/emissions assessment addressing the cumulative potential impact of all on-site emergency generators, prepared in a form acceptable to NCDAQ.
- F. Independent Third-Party Review (Tier 3 - Hyperscale):** [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] may require independent third-party review, at the applicant's expense, of the electrical load, water use, noise, and environmental studies submitted under Sections 4 and 5 for a Tier 3 (Hyperscale) facility, to verify their accuracy and completeness prior to approval.

SECTION 6.

MONITORING AND REPORTING

6.1 Annual Operational Reports

Advisory Note: Communities requiring annual operational reports should identify the staff member or department responsible for reviewing the reports and determining whether any follow-up is needed. This may include reviewing reported changes in water use, wastewater discharge, or facility operations and coordinating with the appropriate utility or department where needed.

All Tier 2 (Large) and Tier 3 (Hyperscale) data centers (Ultimate Electrical Demand of [50] MW or greater) shall submit an annual operational report to the [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] Planning Director by [DECIDE ON DATE] of each year. The annual report should include:

- Total annual water consumption and average daily water use.
- Peak daily water use during the reporting year.
- Total annual wastewater discharge and average daily wastewater discharge.
- Available information on the characteristics of wastewater discharged, including temperature and other parameters required by the applicable wastewater utility or pretreatment program.
- Identification of the primary water source, including potable, reclaimed, or other water sources.
- Any significant changes to water use, cooling systems, or wastewater discharge from the previous reporting year.

6.2 Noise Monitoring

Advisory Note: Before adopting data center-specific noise monitoring or enforcement requirements, communities should first review their existing noise ordinance, complaint procedures, and enforcement provisions. Existing regulations may already provide an adequate process for receiving and investigating complaints, determining violations, requiring corrective action, and enforcing noise standards. Communities should also consider whether existing noise standards adequately address the characteristics of data center noise and are consistent with standards applied to other industrial or similarly situated uses. Where existing regulations adequately address these issues, separate data center-specific complaint or enforcement procedures may be unnecessary.

The appropriate process for receiving citizen complaints will vary by community. [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] should identify the department or official responsible for receiving and investigating noise complaints and ensure that residents have a clear way to submit concerns. Communities should

consult with their local attorney regarding the appropriate zoning, noise ordinance, nuisance, or other enforcement authority for requiring assessments and corrective measures.

Noise complaints associated with a data center shall be submitted and investigated in accordance with [LOCAL GOVERNMENT]'s established noise complaint and enforcement procedures.

Upon receipt of a noise complaint that provides reasonable cause to believe a data center is not complying with the applicable noise standards, [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] may require the data center operator to commission an independent noise assessment by a qualified acoustical professional. The assessment shall evaluate compliance with the applicable noise standards and be submitted to [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] within [60] days, or another timeframe established by [LOCAL GOVERNMENT].

If the assessment identifies an exceedance of the applicable noise standards, the operator shall implement corrective measures within a timeframe established by [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] based on the nature and severity of the exceedance. Corrective measures may include, but are not limited to, installation or modification of acoustical barriers or equipment enclosures, additional soundproofing or sound-attenuating materials, modification or replacement of noise-generating equipment, operational changes, or other measures demonstrated to bring the facility into compliance with the applicable noise standards.

6.3 Compliance Inspections

[LOCAL GOVERNMENT] staff and authorized agents shall have the right, upon reasonable notice, to conduct site inspections to assess compliance with this Ordinance and any conditions of approval. The operator shall provide unrestricted access for inspection purposes to the exterior of the facility and all mechanical equipment areas.

SECTION 7. ENFORCEMENT

7.1 Violations

- A. Notice of Violation.** When [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] determines that a data center is being constructed, operated, maintained, or otherwise used in violation of this Ordinance, an applicable development approval, or other applicable provisions of the [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] Unified Development Ordinance, [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] may issue a written notice of violation in accordance with N.C.G.S. § 160D-404. The notice shall identify the nature of the violation, any corrective action required, and the timeframe within which compliance must be achieved.
- B. Corrective Action.** The property owner and/or operator shall correct the violation within the timeframe specified by [LOCAL GOVERNMENT]. Where appropriate, corrective action may include modification of site improvements or operations, installation or repair of required mitigation measures, restoration of required landscaping or screening, correction of lighting or noise violations, or other actions necessary to bring the property into compliance with this Ordinance and applicable development approvals.
- C. Stop Work Orders.** Where work or activity is undertaken in substantial violation of applicable State or local law, or in a manner that endangers life or property, [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] may issue a stop work order in accordance with N.C.G.S. § 160D-404. The order shall identify the work or activity that must cease and the conditions that must be satisfied before the work or activity may resume.
- D. Continuing Violations and Civil Penalties.** Where authorized by the [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] Unified Development Ordinance, violations may be subject to applicable civil penalties. Each day that a violation continues after the period provided for corrective action may constitute a separate violation, consistent with the enforcement provisions of the [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] Unified Development Ordinance and applicable State law.
- E. Additional Remedies.** In addition to the remedies above, [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] may pursue any other remedy authorized by N.C.G.S. § 160D-404 and the [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] Unified Development Ordinance, including appropriate proceedings to restrain, correct, or abate a violation; prevent unlawful use or development; or prevent occupancy or use where authorized by law. Remedies may be used individually or in combination as permitted by applicable law.

7.2 Remedies

Advisory Note: Each community should review this section against its existing Unified Development Ordinance or zoning code before adoption. *If the existing code already establishes remedies, penalties, permit revocation procedures, or other enforcement mechanisms applicable to zoning violations, the community should cross-reference those provisions rather than duplicate or create potentially inconsistent requirements.*

In addition to any other remedy authorized by law, violations of this Ordinance may be enforced through the remedies available under the [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] Unified Development Ordinance and applicable North Carolina law, including, where authorized, injunctive relief, civil penalties, and the suspension or revocation of permits or approvals issued in connection with the data center. Where the [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] Unified Development Ordinance already establishes applicable enforcement procedures or remedies, those provisions shall govern and need not be duplicated herein. Nothing in this section shall limit the [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] from exercising any other enforcement authority available under applicable law.

SECTION 8.**AMENDMENTS, EFFECTIVE DATE, AND SEVERABILITY****8.1 Amendments**

This Ordinance may be amended in accordance with the procedures set forth in [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] UDO Section [2.3.2] and N.C.G.S. § 160D-106. The Planning Board shall consider proposed amendments and make a recommendation to the Town Council. The Town Council shall hold a public hearing prior to making a final decision.

8.2 Effective Date

This Ordinance shall become effective upon adoption by the [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] Town Council and shall apply to all development applications submitted on or after the effective date.

8.3 Severability

Communities should adapt this provision to align with any severability language already included in their Unified Development Ordinance or local code. Where appropriate, a provision may state that if any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase is held invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remaining portions of the ordinance remain in effect.

Legal Disclaimer

This document is a draft template ordinance for discussion and local adaptation only and is not intended to constitute legal advice or a ready-to-adopt ordinance. The provisions and numerical standards included in the draft are starting-point recommendations informed by research and analysis of peer jurisdictions, technical and practitioner input, and discussions of the Data Center Working Group convened by Central Pines Regional Council.

The language has not been determined to be appropriate, legally sufficient, or enforceable in every North Carolina jurisdiction. Before using or adopting any portion of the draft, each local government should review it with its local government attorney, planning staff, and appropriate technical professionals and evaluate it against its existing UDO, local conditions, infrastructure capacity, and applicable state and federal requirements.

Communities should not duplicate or replace existing UDO provisions that already adequately address an issue. All bracketed language and numerical standards require local determination and legal and technical review before adoption.

CENTRAL PINES REGIONAL COUNCIL

BOARD OF DELEGATES MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, August 26, 2026 | 6:00 – 8:00 pm

Central Pines Conference Room & Virtual

Chair Susan Evans Presiding

Delegates & Alternates Attending:

Fallon Brewington, Aberdeen
Sheveil Harmon, Angier
Terry Mahaffey, Apex
Donald Andrews, Broadway
Danny Nowell, Carrboro
Amanda Robertson, Chatham County
Kris Vorren, Fuquay-Varina
Elmo Vance, Garner
Kathleen Ferguson, Hillsborough
Chris Deshazor, Holly Springs
Steve Evans, Knightdale
Ashit Patel, Morrisville
Sally Greene, Orange County
Stacy Johnson, Princeton
Mitchell Silver, Raleigh
Ronnie Currin, Rolesville
Rebecca Wyhof Salmon, Sanford
Byron McAllister, Selma
Ann Petersen, Southern Pines
Susan Evans, Wake County
Joe DeLoach, Wendell
Rick Hutchinson, Whispering Pines
Doris Riley, Wilson's Mills

CPRC Staff Attending:

Grace Berry, Management Analyst
Jenny Halsey, Deputy Executive Director
Jenisha Henneghan, Area Agency on
Aging Director
Alana Keegan, Local Government
Services Director
Carolyn Pennington, Regional
Ombudsman
Ashley Price, Area Agency on Aging
Assistant Director
Hannah Schuette, Management Analyst
Beth Seidel, Clerk to the Board
Hope Tally, Chief Finance Officer
Lindsay Whitson, Community &
Economic Development Director
Lee Worsley, Executive Director

Guests

Doug Plachcinski, Triangle West TPO
Executive Director

1. Call to Order

- a. Call to Order
- b. Roll Call
- c. Declaration of Quorum

Chair Susan Evans called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm and reviewed the process for hybrid meetings. Beth Seidel, Clerk to the Board, completed the Roll Call and it was determined there was a quorum present at the meeting.

d. Get to Know CPRC

Chair Evans shared that in 1971, the Research Triangle Regional Planning Commission, the predecessor to the Central Pines Regional Council, produced The Research Triangle Region of North Carolina Economic Indicators. Regional Planning Commission staff compiled this book with a federal grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. It documented economic indicators from both the public and private sectors. It's important to note that in 1971, our organization served Wake, Durham, and Orange counties only, so this publication only covers that area.

2. Review of Agenda

a. Review of Agenda

Chair Evans reviewed and approved the agenda as presented.

3. Presentations & Recognition

a. Recognition of Past Chair Byron McAllister

Chair Evans recognized CPRC Past Chair Byron McAllister, Mayor, Town of Selma. She shared words of thanks for his service to the Board and presented him with a token of appreciation.

4. Public Hearing

5. CPRC Program/Service Spotlight

a. CPRC Program Overview & Year in Review

Alana Keegan, CPRC Local Government Services Director, gave an overview of the Central Pines Regional Council programs and highlighted several from each of the newly identified strategic focus areas. Central Pines administers about 109 programs, and Ms. Keegan gave highlights of a few of these programs in each of the focus areas. The [Year in Review document](#) can be found on the Central Pines website.

Board Members were very complimentary of the work that's being done at Central Pines.

6. Business

7. Consent Agenda

- a. Draft Minutes: May 2026
- b. TWTPPO item, Resolution #2026-08-01

Clerk to the Board Beth Seidel noted a few minor changes that were made to the minutes.

Action: Adoption of Consent Agenda as presented

Motion: Delegate Kathleen Ferguson

Second: Delegate Amanda Robertson

Vote: Approved unanimously by roll call

8. Items Removed from Consent Agenda

9. Chair's Report

Chair Evans welcomed members back from summer break and expressed optimism for the year ahead. She discussed a tax-related constitutional

amendment that will appear on the November ballot and encouraged members to help residents understand its implications, noting that elected officials have a responsibility to explain the measure clearly.

10. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Lee Worsley mentioned that there is already a limit to property tax rates in effect in North Carolina.

Mr. Worsley thanked Past Chair Byron McAllister for his service over the past year and support of CPRC staff and the organization. Building on the earlier Program Overview, he invited ideas to help ensure CPRC's work aligns with local governments' needs and priorities. He emphasized that CPRC serves as an extension of their staff, belongs to its members, and depends on active regional participation.

CPRC is seeking a current delegate or alternate to serve on the Foreign Trade Zone Board. Interested members should contact Beth Seidel. Questions about the FTZ Board may be directed to Delegate Rebecca Salmon.

The third annual Local Government Career Expo will be held this Saturday, August 29, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the McKimmon Center in Raleigh. More than 800 job seekers and 20 employers are registered to attend.

Staff recently completed technical assistance to help Whispering Pines select its next village manager and have begun supporting Archer Lodge's strategic planning process.

The Pines Preserves Library, which houses CPRC's archives, is nearly complete, and materials will be available for checkout. Delegate Kathleen Ferguson asked about plans to digitize the collection; those plans are still being developed.



11. Around the Region

Chair Evans opened the floor for members to share anything that's going on in their community.

Raleigh

Data centers have been a hot topic across the country. They had an application for an annexation to build a data center. Had over 100 people sign up to speak. The applicant withdrew their application. Some have called for a moratorium. The City had a presentation from IT to understand data centers. That presentation is available and can be shared.

Holly Springs

Many towns are in moratoriums for data centers. Holly Springs has asked CPRC to come present on data centers at their next meeting. They also have a transparency portal that has some good information. Delegate Deshazor wondered if it's possible to have something like this that's centralized. Alana Keegan shared that we do have a resource on our website but will communicate that better. We also have a data center working group that is working on template ordinance language.

Chatham County

They are also working with CPRC on data centers, and coordinating with planning board. Chatham County is facing a pipeline that goes from Siler City to Moncure. The County is being sued by a data center company that wants to put a data center in along the pipeline. Delegate Amanda Robertson encouraged Board Members to make sure you have language in your ordinances that address such instances.

Wake County

Data centers were a major topic of conversation at the State Association of County Commissioners meeting. Chair Evans shared that Mike Turner from Loudoun County, VA is a great resource for data centers who spoke at the 2026 CPRC Regional Day. Wake County has spent the last 4 months learning about hospital administration and mergers, regarding the Wake Med hospital. It is almost

impossible for a smaller locally owned hospital to have long term liability in our current environment.

Hillsborough

Delegate Kathleen Ferguson recognized CPRC for engaging on their housing assistance. They have been very impressed with the work that's been done so far.

Sanford

Sanford, Lee County, Broadway worked on ordinance regulations on how they approach data centers. Sanford had a great economic development opportunity land in Lee County. Steris announced a \$600M project located in their community. These companies aren't just looking at boundaries; they are looking at the region.

Rolesville

Delegate Ronnie Currin shared that they will be getting a new emergency center. This will be the first hospital in their town.

Fuquay-Varina

Delegate Kris Vorren shared that they are working on an innovation transfer to transfer water. In the last budget, a moratorium was passed. This is something to keep on your radar, especially past the Cape Fear River Basin. They were fortunate enough to get language inserted into the budget that any transfers in progress are exempt.

12. Other Business

13. Adjournment

With there being nothing further, Chair Evans adjourned the meeting at 7:31 pm.

Duly adopted this 28th day of October while in regular session.

Susan P. Evans, Board Chair

ATTEST:

Beth Seidel, Clerk to the Board
Central Pines Regional Council

DRAFT



Central Pines Regional Council Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Board of Delegates

Agenda Item Information

Agenda Item Title: FY26-27 Budget Amendment #2
Meeting Date: October 28 (Board of Delegates)
Agenda Location: Consent Agenda
Presenter(s): N/A
Recommendation: Place on Consent Agenda

Background Information

Overview/Summary <i>Use plain language, spell out acronyms, and assume the reader knows nothing about your topic</i>	According to the Budget Resolution for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 adopted on May 27, 2026, the Chief Finance Officer is authorized to transfer funds within and among divisions as needed during the fiscal year. Any additions or reductions to the total budget warrant adoption of an amendment to the FY27 budget resolution. The proposed attached resolution increases the total CPRC budget by \$108,101. <u>New Project Funding:</u> Central Pines Regional Council will administer the Triangle Trails Initiative beginning November 1, 2026. Funding for the project will be provided by Council’s 501(c)(3), The Center for Regional Excellence, through donations to The Center. <u>Changes to Project Funding:</u> No changes to project funding to the FY27 budget at this time.
What communities in our region are impacted?	
Funding (if applicable) <i>Explain any funding for this item, how it's acquired, allocated, etc.</i>	

Supporting Documents (figure out this display/wording)

- Is there any supporting documentation?
- ☐ No
 - ☒ Yes (If yes, please list the attachments below)
 - Budget Amendment Resolution

**Central Pines Regional Council
A Resolution for Budget Amendment 2
of the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget**

WHEREAS, the Central Pines Regional Council adopted its 2026-2027 Budget Resolution on May 27, 2026; and, **WHEREAS**, it is necessary for Central Pines Regional Council to make a revision by way of the following amendment;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Central Pines Regional Council FY 2026-2027 Budget Resolution is hereby amended as follows:

SECTION 1. REVENUES

Revenues by Source:	Revised	Amendment	New Revised
Federal	\$ 5,190,470	\$ -	\$ 5,190,470
Federal Pass Thru	\$ 22,422,709	\$ -	\$ 22,422,709
State	\$ 1,155,052	\$ -	\$ 1,155,052
State Pass Thru	\$ 45,918	\$ -	\$ 45,918
Member Investment	\$ 964,368	\$ -	\$ 964,368
Member Investment - TWTPPO	\$ 1,075,543	\$ -	\$ 1,075,543
Special Local Dues	\$ 1,506,235	\$ -	\$ 1,506,235
Local Aging Share	\$ 290,781	\$ -	\$ 290,781
Intergovernmental	\$ 351,668	\$ -	\$ 351,668
Project Income	\$ 1,552,779	\$ 108,101	\$ 1,660,880
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$ 138,973	\$ -	\$ 138,973
Other Revenue	\$ 108,009	\$ -	\$ 108,009
General Fund Total Revenues:	\$ 34,802,505	\$ 108,101	\$ 34,910,606

SECTION 2. EXPENDITURES

Expenditures by Strategic Focus Area	Revised	Amendment	New Revised
Connected Places	\$ 6,832,159	\$ 108,101	\$ 6,940,260
Connected Places-TWTPPO	\$ 5,735,308	\$ -	\$ 5,735,308
Organization Excellence	\$ 318,293	\$ -	\$ 318,293
Prosperous & Sustainable Region	\$ 3,662,746	\$ -	\$ 3,662,746
Thriving People & Communities	\$ 1,623,303	\$ -	\$ 1,623,303
Housing	\$ 16,630,696	\$ -	\$ 16,630,696
General Fund Total Expenditures:	\$ 34,802,505	\$ 108,101	\$ 34,910,606

Adopted and approved on this 28th day of October 2026.

Susan P. Evans, Chair

Attest:

Lee Worsley, Executive Director

October 2026



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Lee Worsley, Executive Director
Central Pines Regional Council



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Major Metro Regional Council Highlight

SEMCOG Looks to Address “E-Motos” in Safety Plans

As the use of electric bikes and higher-powered e-motos continues to increase across Southeast Michigan, SEMCOG is expanding its efforts to help communities address emerging safety concerns, especially for “e-motos,” a two-wheeled electric vehicle with more power than a traditional e-bike. Through its SEMCOG University series, the organization recently convened experts, local officials, and advocacy groups to discuss strategies for improving safety. SEMCOG is also collecting and reviewing local ordinances, developing educational materials, and incorporating the issue into its transportation safety initiatives. The goal is to help local governments and the state craft effective policies that improve safety, particularly for young riders, while preserving existing infrastructure for and use of legal e-bikes that provide important mobility benefits for many residents.



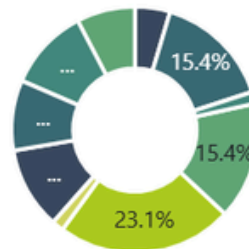
[Learn More About SEMCOG](#)



Local Government Member Request Dashboard

Our Member Services Team maintains a real-time Member Request dashboard that helps to track incoming requests from our local governments, rate of utilization by members, and emerging areas of need.

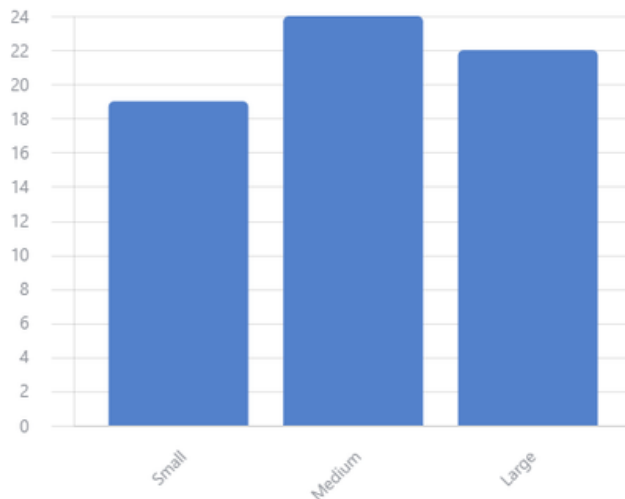
Request by Category ⓘ



Category

- Strategic Planning
- Infrastructure Planning
- Grant Administration
- Community Planning & Zoning
- Retreat and Meeting Facilities
- Human Resources Services
- Finance Services
- Other
- Housing Services
- Data or Information Seeking

Requests by Size



Member Requests

25-26 Requests

65

24-25 Requests

60

25-26 Space Reservations

108



NARC & NADO Updates

Updates (mostly federal in nature) from the National Association of Regional Councils and the National Association of Development Organization.

Data Center Consumer Protection Bill Fails to Advance in Senate



The Senate failed to advance a bill aimed at protecting consumers from the energy costs associated with data centers last week in a 57-43 vote, three votes shy of the necessary 60-vote majority. The bipartisan [Ratepayer Protection Act](#) would ask states to consider adopting federal standards to ensure tech companies pay for their strain on electrical grids rather than passing costs to consumers. The bill previously [passed the House in a 417-3 vote](#) but is encountering pushback from Senate Democrats for its voluntary nature, with Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) describing the legislation as “toothless” and calling for measures to mandate tech company coverage of data center costs.

Federal Judge Rules FEMA Election Security Requirements for HSGP Are Unlawful



A federal court ruled last Monday that the administration’s proposed conditioning of Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) funds on election security requirements is unlawful. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) released [new guidelines](#) for HSGP, which funds readiness for response to terrorism and other catastrophes, in July, allowing FEMA to withhold 20% of HSGP funding until a grantee implements specified election security standards, including citizenship verification. Four localities in Ohio, Tennessee, and Texas sued DHS, arguing that the requirements would undermine their ability to protect residents. A federal judge vacated the conditions, arguing they exceeded FEMA’s authority. FEMA said it will comply with the court order but remains committed to fighting threats to election integrity.

National Housing Crisis Task Force Releases Guide for Local Leaders to Take Advantage of Housing Bill



The National Housing Crisis Task Force (NHCTF), a multisector coalition aiming to address America's housing crisis, released an action guide for mayors and other local leaders to take advantage of the [21st Century ROAD to Housing Act](#) to increase housing supply. The guide outlines seven actions officials can take to position their communities for success as ROAD implementation begins. These strategies include updating zoning and land-use rules to prepare for new low-cost housing types, convening stakeholders to make a plan to maximize impact, and building a public inventory of viable land for housing development. The guide also includes further resources for local housing officials, including NHCTF’s [State and Local Housing Action Plan](#).

Congress is in recess.



2030 Census Rulemaking

On October 13, NARC submitted the attached substantive comments to the Census Bureau regarding its [proposed rule](#) to make changes to the decennial census residence criteria and demographic questions.

Previously, NARC joined AMPO (Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) and NADO (the National Association of Development Organizations) in a joint letter, attached, requesting an extension of the comment period. Our request was successful, resulting in a comment period that was extended from October 13, 2026 to **November 2, 2026**.

Substantively, in the attached letter, NARC recommends that the Census Bureau preserve their existing methodology and not make proposed changes, arguing that regions and local governments depend on accurate population and demographic data for transportation planning, economic development, service delivery, and federal funding.

Specifically, NARC recommends keeping the current April 1 residence standard for now, continuing to count all U.S. residents regardless of citizenship status, and retaining key demographic questions, conveying that the proposed changes could lead to less accurate data, reduce the ability of regional councils to plan for the future, and limit funding for communities.

We encourage you to use our letter as a jumping off point to submit educational comments to the Census Bureau and to contact your congressional delegation. Congress has the final approval over the Census questions. Now is the time to educate and inform your delegation.

NARC will continue to monitor this rulemaking and keep you updated. More information and resources are available below.

Resources

- On September 18, a group of census and data-oriented groups hosted a webinar explaining the proposed changes to the census and the challenges that the changes present. A recording of the presentation and additional resources are [available here](#).
- On September 28, the National League of Cities (NLC) and the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) hosted a joint [webinar](#) on the proposed rule.
- NLC has a template letter to the Census Bureau [here](#), and a template letter to your Member of Congress [here](#).



H.R.1 Implementation

On October 1, three major changes under H.R.1, One Big Beautiful Bill, will take effect. States and local governments will assume a larger share of SNAP administrative costs, with the non-federal contribution increasing to 75 percent from 50 percent and potentially adding tens or even hundreds of millions of dollars in annual expenses for states and local governments. The law also narrows the definition of qualified immigrants for Medicaid eligibility, making certain lawfully present immigrants, including refugees, asylees, and humanitarian parolees, ineligible for coverage. Additionally, H.R. 1 reduces federal funding for emergency Medicaid services provided to undocumented individuals by lowering the federal matching rate to each state's standard reimbursement level, eliminating the enhanced federal funding currently available for these services.

EPA Reconvenes its Local Government Advisory Committee

On October 1, three major changes under H.R.1, One Big Beautiful Bill, will take effect. States and local governments will assume a larger share of SNAP administrative costs, with the non-federal contribution increasing to 75 percent from 50 percent and potentially adding tens or even hundreds of millions of dollars in annual expenses for states and local governments. The law also narrows the definition of qualified immigrants for Medicaid eligibility, making certain lawfully present immigrants, including refugees, asylees, and humanitarian parolees, ineligible for coverage. Additionally, H.R. 1 reduces federal funding for emergency Medicaid services provided to undocumented individuals by lowering the federal matching rate to each state's standard reimbursement level, eliminating the enhanced federal funding currently available for these services.

Proposed Updates to Capital Investment Grants Program Guidance

On September 30, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) proposed updates to its Capital Investment Grants (CIG) program guidance. The proposal would introduce new reporting requirements and project milestones throughout the CIG process, establish standardized project rating criteria, and place greater emphasis on non-CIG funding contributions and formal cost-effectiveness measures when evaluating projects. Under the proposed framework, projects with higher levels of non-federal cost sharing would receive more favorable ratings, while reducing the relative weight of environmental and affordable housing benefits but giving projects in areas with certain birth and marriage rates an enhanced federal cost share. The proposed guidance is open for public comment through November 16.



OMB Proposed Rule

While the continuing resolution (CR) blocks the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) from finalizing its proposed rule on federal grantmaking until December 11, several federal agencies, including the Department of Education, National Science Foundation, and Department of Housing and Urban Development, have already issued or are preparing similar rules that would expand political appointees' authority to review grant awards. On Monday, September 21, Senate Appropriations Chair Susan Collins (R-Maine) said the rule at the National Institutes of Health, or any other agency, is "contrary to congressional intent."

Fiscal Year Ends; Appropriations Work Remains Unfinished

The Fiscal Year (FY) ended on September 30. However, the short-term funding patch passed early this month maintains government funding until December 11. When Congress returns, lawmakers will have roughly five legislative weeks to negotiate and pass FY2027 appropriations legislation or approve another continuing resolution to keep the government funded. With the Senate yet to release any of its appropriations bills, significant work remains before the December deadline, increasing the likelihood of another short-term funding extension.

USDA Rural Development Announces Pilot Multifamily Housing Program

On September 22, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development announced the Multifamily Housing Loan Preservation Pilot and Multifamily Housing Guaranteed Loan Notice of Loan-to-Cost Percentage Change to preserve and produce affordable rural rental housing. Current USDA transfer approval and closing timelines for rural rental properties often exceed those of other lenders, the private sector, and funding partners. The pilot aims to speed up property transfers, reduce duplicate paperwork, and preserve rural affordable housing stock. Read the press release [HERE](#).

Bipartisan Lawmakers Propose Bill to Void Data Center NDAs



A bipartisan group of lawmakers spearheaded by Congressman Greg Landsman (D-Ohio-01), Congressman Tom Barrett (R-Mich.-07), and Congressman Jamie Raskin (D-Md.-08) introduced a bill to increase local transparency surrounding data center construction. The No Secrets for Data Centers Act would void non-disclosure agreements that local public officials sign to hide details of data center projects, as well as prevent data center developers from accepting government subsidies that are conditional on keeping project details out of the public eye. Congressman Barret said transparency was necessary to ensure local residents "have the final say about data centers in their communities."



GAO Report Finds FEMA Funding Inconsistency Created Obstacles for Local Disaster Mitigation



In a new [report](#), the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found inefficiencies and communication failures in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) [Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities \(BRIC\)](#) program. In April 2025, FEMA cancelled funding distributions to local subapplicants of BRIC grants, which fund local hazard mitigation efforts, claiming the program "[was more concerned with political agendas than helping Americans affected by natural disasters](#)." FEMA restarted funding in March 2026 to comply with a [court order](#), but GAO found its lack of communication with grantees during the disruption created implementation challenges. GAO recommended that FEMA improve its communication methods and establish results-oriented goals for BRIC. In response, FEMA said it will explore methods to improve the BRIC applicant experience.

Members of Congress Introduce Disaster Relief Fairness Legislation



In response to the administration's denial of some states' declarations of major disasters, members of Congress introduced legislation last Tuesday to reform the Federal Emergency Agency's (FEMA) disaster aid request procedures. Representatives Gabe Amo (D-R.I.) and Laura Friedman (D-Calif.) introduced the [Disaster Relief Fairness Act](#), which would prevent the administration from rejecting any disaster declaration made by a state or tribal leader that meets FEMA thresholds and requirements, ensuring that affected areas would receive federal disaster assistance. Congressman Amo cited the administration's disproportionate denial of disaster aid requests from Democratic governors as a driver for the legislation.

How BUILD America 250 Could Impact Rural Transit



BUILD America 250, the proposed multi-year House surface transportation reauthorization bill, could represent a setback for rural transit systems, according to a new article from Grist. The legislation does not include the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act's "advance appropriations" for rail and transit projects, reducing [potential funding in those areas by 45%](#). This change could have a disproportionate impact on rural transit systems, which rely on federal funds more than their urban counterparts. Funding changes at rural transit agencies could leave rural and disabled residents socially isolated by service cuts. An expert from the National Campaign for Transit Justice also pointed out that the transit cuts could create long-term financial strain on rural American families, who might be pushed to buy an additional car or more gas.



Appeals Court Allows HUD to Proceed with Homelessness Program Funding Shift



A U.S. Appeals Court ruled that the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) can proceed with shifting homelessness program funds away from permanent housing services. When HUD announced it would restrict \$1.3 billion out of \$4 billion appropriated for the [Continuum of Care program](#) to transitional housing and supportive service-only grants, 22 states and a coalition of housing advocacy grants sued and a District Judge blocked HUD's proposal. The Appeals Court put a hold on the District Judge's ruling, clearing the way for changes to the grant program. HUD Secretary Scott Turner called the ruling "a win for taxpayers" in moving the program away from a "failed ideology."

Local Officials Say Threats and Harassment Increasingly Affect Their Work



A recent study from Princeton University's Bridging Divides Initiative found that local officials are facing unprecedented levels of threats and harassment. More than half of 500 surveyed local officials reported experiencing hostility in the previous three months, including insults, harassment, and threats. Women and minority officials experienced disproportionately high levels of harassment. As a result of the hostility, 76% of local officials said they withdrew from at least one civic engagement effort, which is the highest level the researchers have seen so far. Sam Wilson, a senior research specialist at Bridging Divides, said that in the face of growing political divisiveness, both local officials and law enforcement need better tools to assess threat credibility. Bridging Divides also provides a [resource directory](#) to help local officials develop de-escalation skills.

How Urban Planners Can Integrate Accessibility Beyond ADA Requirements



While the Americans with Disability Act of 1990 (ADA) established key accessibility standards, many issues remain unaddressed by its legal framework. In a Smart Cities Dive opinion piece, Jessica Aiello, CEO of TCS Interpreting, argues that local leaders need to look beyond ADA compliance to include deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) individuals in planning. Starting points for "meaningful accessibility" including investing in basic inclusive communication for public meetings such as ASL interpretation or real-time captioning, incorporating accessibility into design, such as rounded public benches so speakers can see each other easily or installing automatic doors, and including DHH residents in all steps of the planning process or even creating a DHH advisory group. If accessibility is "built in from the start," everyone benefits and costly failures are avoided.



Updates

Kramden Institute



At the **August Board meeting**, members asked how local governments can engage with the **Kramden Institute**, an organization that provides computers to individuals in need. For more information, visit the [Kramden Institute website](#).

The [Kramden Institute guide](#) explains how local governments can legally and effectively donate retired computers. These donations help Kramden provide more free or low-cost devices to people who need better access to technology.

Upcoming Events

Be sure to mark your calendars for these upcoming events!



CPRC Executive Committee Meeting
Wednesday, November 18
6:00 - 8:00 pm | Virtual



End of Year Celebration & Golden Pinecone Awards
Wednesday, December 2
5:00 - 7:00 pm | CPRC Office



CENTRAL PINES

REGIONAL COUNCIL

Golden Pinecone Awards

Award Descriptions & Nomination Details

Evergreen Excellence

Awarded to local government staff members. Can be nominated by anyone.

Recognizes an outstanding local government staff member - at any level - who demonstrates dedication, innovation, and a positive impact in their community.

Longleaf Leadership

Awarded to an elected official. Can be nominated by anyone.

Celebrates an elected official who has shown exceptional leadership, vision, and service to their community and the region.

Rooted in Results

Awarded to a project. Can be nominated by anyone.

Honors an outstanding project that strengthened two (+) communities or the region. Projects that cross county lines or partnerships with CPRC staff, member governments, or stakeholders, will be given preference.

Heart of the Pine

Nominated by CPRC Staff.

Selected by CPRC staff, this award honors an individual, organization, or partner who has been a strong advocate and supporter of Central Pines Regional Council and its mission.

DEADLINE FOR NOMINATIONS:

Thursday, November 12, 2026

AWARDS WILL BE PRESENTED:

Wednesday, December 2, 6 pm
at End of Year Celebration

CONTACT

📞 919-549-0551

✉ connect@centralpinesnc.gov

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