



MINIMAL BY DESIGN

No rush hour traffic. No strain on roads and infrastructure. Minimal demand on emergency services. A functioning data center is essentially invisible to its neighbors in terms of daily activity.

What It Actually Looks Like to Live Near a Data Center

The day-to-day reality is much calmer than zoning debate suggests

Once a data center is operational, its presence in the community tends to be quiet. Its contributions are anything but.

These facilities don't generate rush hour traffic or significant wear and tear on local roads. They're highly secure, access-controlled environments with perimeter lighting, surveillance, and on-site security that tends to deter criminal activity in the surrounding area. The tax revenue they generate funds local schools, roads, and public services, often at a disproportionately high level relative to the land they occupy.

Noise is often the most immediate concern for nearby residents, and it's worth being specific. Modern data centers use acoustic louvers, sound barriers, and enclosed mechanical systems to meet local noise ordinances and regulations. For most neighbors, the facility is simply not something they notice day to day.

That combination of significant economic contribution, minimal disruption, and enhanced local security is what communities that have lived alongside data centers for years tend to report.

THE TRUTH ABOUT DATA CENTERS

The Culpeper Model

Economic benefit without compromise

Like many communities across the country, Culpeper, Virginia found itself at a familiar crossroads: The economic benefits of data center investment were real and significant, but so were the concerns about what large-scale industrial development might do to the rural character that makes the community what it is.

The answer was the Culpeper Tech Zone (CTZ); a designated area within the county where data center development is welcome, encouraged, and concentrated. Rather than allowing facilities to scatter across the landscape, the community drew a line. Data centers belong in the zone. Everything outside it stays the way it is.

The results now speak for themselves. Tax revenue, jobs, and economic activity have followed the investment, while the open space, rural landscape, and quality of life that residents wanted to protect have remained intact.

The framework also includes requirements for local business engagement, STEM education programs, and workforce development initiatives that extend the benefit beyond the facility fence line and into the broader community.



“

We started every meeting with partners saying we're looking for the best example of data center cluster development in the world. Working with DataBank, we're building that together. It's proof that rural communities can define their own terms for growth.

— Bryan Rothamel,
Economic Development Director, Culpeper County

”