Data Center LDR Analysis

Planning and Zoning Division

Data center development has become a local concern with the recent proposed expansion of an AI data center on Southern Boulevard known as “Project Tango”. This project has also generated concern about the potential for data center development in Wellington. The concerns about this type of development include environmental impacts, utility and water consumption, and impacts on quality of life such as traffic, population growth, noise pollution, and a loss of land for other uses.

Recently, Senate Bill (SB) 484, related to data centers, became effective on July 1, 2026. The Bill states local governments shall maintain the authority to exercise its powers and responsibilities for comprehensive planning and land development regulation granted by law with respect to large load customers. A “Large load customer” is defined as a customer with an anticipated monthly peak load of 50 megawatts or more, calculated as the highest average load over a 15-minute interval at a single location. In response to resident concerns, Wellington is considering a Zoning in Progress to establish a moratorium on the acceptance, review, and processing of any development applications for data centers while the Land Development Regulations (LDR) are evaluated to determine appropriate changes to regulate the use consistent with the community’s expectations.

Below is a preliminary analysis of how the Wellington LDR currently classifies data centers and the development standards that apply. In conjunction with Council’s direction, this information will inform the recommended changes to the LDR.

Current Use Classification for Data Centers: Warehouse

Districts which permit Warehouse: Flex District

Supplemental Standards: 532 – Warehousing

- Not open to the public.
- All materials shall be stored within the building.
- No manufacturing, assembly, or processing on-site.
- Retail sales prohibited.
- Office space to support warehouse use is limited to 25% of the gross floor area (gfa).

Development Regulations:

- Minimum Lot Size – one (1) acre
- Minimum Lot Width – 100 feet
- Minimum Lot Depth – 200 feet
- Minimum FAR – 0.45
- Maximum Building Coverage – 45%
- Minimum Setbacks
    - Front – 40 feet
    - Side – 15 feet
    - Corner – 25 feet
    - Rear – 20 feet
- Parking – one (1) space/1,000 Net Square feet (NSF), plus one (1) space/200 NSF of Office.

To specifically address data centers in the LDR, the following LDR changes should be considered:

- Adding definitions for:
  - Data Center (Large-scale and Small-scale)
  - Large Load Customer
- Limiting the zoning districts where the use is permitted
- Limiting the size and intensity of the use, i.e., not permit large load customers
- Establishing supplemental regulations specific to data centers:
  - Minimum acreage required.
  - Maximum square footage permitted.
  - Require traffic study.
  - Specific parking rates.
  - Noise mitigation and maximum sound levels.
  - Use of materials in the building design that will dampen the sound.
  - Buffering and separation requirements from adjacent uses, when applicable.
  - Use of reclaimed water when available.
  - Compatibility with surrounding uses.
  - Comply with all other applicable standards of the LDR related to drainage, water and wastewater, etc.
  - Obtain all required state and regional approvals related to water, energy, and natural resources before obtaining a Land Development Permit.
  - Provide documentation that addresses public health and safety, construction, operation, economic development, tax revenue, and recommendations on facility siting and mitigation measures for potential negative impacts of a Large-scale data center based on the policies provided by the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA).