

QUESTIONS TO ASK AT PUBLIC MEETINGS

If you plan to attend a public meeting or hearing, being well-prepared can make a real difference. Many data center proposals are presented with compelling arguments, and understanding these claims ahead of time will help you participate more effectively. Below are some of the most common reasons offered in support of data center projects, along with guiding questions you can use to understand better, evaluate, and respond to them.

This table helps you prepare for public hearings. It shows common statements you may hear from developers or officials, what those statements often mean in plain English, and follow-up questions you ask to get clear, honest answers. Use it as a guide to help you speak up, ask the right questions, and better understand what is being proposed in your community.

WHEN THEY SAY...	ASK...
<i>This proposal uses far less water and energy than “traditional” cooling methods</i>	<p>Ask for specifics and documentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much less water and energy, in actual numbers (daily and annual)? • What cooling technology will be used, and how does it compare to other options? • How will the project’s energy be generated (fossil fuel, renewables, grid mix)? • What water- and energy-efficiency or conservation measures are included? • How much water will be consumptively used (evaporated and not returned)? • If a closed-loop system is proposed, how often must it be replenished? • What chemicals or additives will the water contain, and where will it be discharged or disposed of?
<i>This project will attract other tech companies and employers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much additional growth is anticipated, and over what time frame? • How will the community ensure sufficient water and energy for existing residents and businesses if the increased economic development occurs? • Has the cumulative impact of multiple facilities been evaluated?
<i>This proposal will create X number of jobs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many jobs are permanent versus temporary construction jobs? • How many positions are directly employed at the data center? • What wages, benefits, and skill levels are expected? • Will residents be prioritized for these jobs?
<i>This is a major investment in the city</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the concrete, long-term benefits to the community? • How does this investment compare to the public costs and risks? • Are there incentives, tax abatements, or exemptions involved?

<p><i>This project will generate significant revenue for the city</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much revenue will be generated, and over what period? • How does revenue compare to foregone taxes or incentives? • How will the city protect itself from over-reliance on a single facility or industry?
<p><i>The data center will pay for the needed infrastructure</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How might this affect water, sewer, or energy rates for residents? • Who pays if infrastructure must be expanded in the future? • If increased demand causes water main breaks or system failures, who is financially responsible?
<p><i>The data center will use advanced fire suppression systems</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the local fire department have the training and equipment to respond? • Will the company provide funding, training, or resources to first responders? • What are the water demands of fire suppression, and how could they affect local supplies during emergencies?