



WEST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP
Planning Commission
Agenda
Tuesday, January 6, 2026
7:00 P.M.

[Etiquette for
hybrid meetings](#)

Meeting will be held in-person and via Zoom

[Register for Zoom Meeting](#)

Call by Phone: 1-646-558-8656

Meeting ID: 873 0897 0242 Passcode: 507637

Meeting Packets can be found on the Township website.

Reminder to meeting participants: Please speak clearly into the microphone.

CALL TO ORDER

REORGANIZATION

REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes: December 2, 2025

PUBLIC COMMENT/CONCERNS/QUESTIONS

Comments or questions regarding issues NOT on the agenda should be raised at this time. Members of the public will have an opportunity to ask questions and comment upon agenda items during the discussion on those items.

PLANS

No plans are complete for review for this agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

OLD BUSINESS

DISCUSSION

Data center ordinance update.

ADJOURNMENT

Next Meeting: January 20, 2025



MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: John R. Weller, AICP
Director of Planning and Zoning
SUBJECT: Discussion on zoning for data centers
DATE: January 2, 2022

We have already had some preliminary discussion regarding zoning for data centers, largely prompted by the data center project recently approved by East Whiteland on a property abutting West Whiteland. Of course, data centers have also been in the news a lot, often in regard to negative impacts on the community where they're located.

The Supervisors have directed us to prepare draft Zoning regulations to address data centers. The Commission will recall that, since data centers are a legal use of property, we do not have the option of simply prohibiting them, but we can regulate them. At this time, Staff is still in the process of researching the aspects of data centers that are best regulated by Zoning as well as identifying best practices from other communities. In December 2025, we virtually attended a webinar from Penn State that addressed common community concerns and also provided some insight into what data center developers look for when selecting a site for their project.

The purpose of tonight's discussion is to bring the Commission up to date on our research and to identify and/or prioritize Commission concerns to be addressed as we craft the draft regulations for inclusion in our Zoning Ordinance.

The current working definition we have for a "data center" is **"A building or a portion of a building that houses computer systems and associated components, which may include but are not limited to servers, switches, routers, communication hardware, and back-up energy sources such as battery storage."** As we have noted previously, a "data center" may be as small and innocuous as the server room here in the Township Building. The PSU webinar confirmed this, noting that the industry currently has four classifications for data centers:

- MICRO data centers are smaller than 5,000 sq.ft., and are typically accessory uses with little to no impact on surrounding properties.
- A SMALL data center has between 5,000 sq.ft. and 20,000 sq.ft. of floor area. At this size, the data center could still be an accessory use, occupying a portion of a larger building, or the sole occupant of a moderately sized building. For reference, consider that the Raymour and Flanigan store across the street has a footprint of about 37,000 sq.ft. In either case, the impact upon surrounding properties is still negligible.
- An AVERAGE data center will be up to 100,000 sq.ft., containing up to 5,000 servers;
- A HYPERSCALE data center is anything larger than an average data center.

We intend to focus our regulations on average and hyperscale centers, as these have the greatest impact and are most likely to be the principal use of a property.

Since data centers are power-hungry, Pennsylvania has emerged as a popular location for data centers, due to the prevalence of relatively cheap power from natural gas and nuclear-powered generators. In addition to cheap power, data center developers also look for:

- a robust power grid with existing redundancy;
- existing broadband infrastructure (proximity to a minimum of two reliable fiber networks);
- available land – a minimum of fifty acres, relatively level, with low vulnerability to natural disasters;
- readily available water for cooling (although other cooling options may be considered); and
- separate from residential areas.

In contrast, community concerns include:

- impact upon energy resources (i.e., the potential for rate increases for existing users in response to the cost of building new generating facilities);
- impact upon water supply;
- environmental impact of very large buildings (stormwater runoff, micro-climate, groundwater recharge, etc.);
- noise, particularly related to cooling equipment and outdoor emergency generators (which need to be tested regularly); and
- what happens to the very large buildings should the data center become obsolete.

Our current regulations allow data centers as a conditional use in the General Industrial (I-2) zoning district under the general “catch all” provision in §325-19.B(11)(i) of the Zoning Ordinance. In addition, we already have stormwater management regulations and performance standards to address at least the most critical environmental concerns. However, these are somewhat generic and may not be best suited to addressing impacts unique to data centers – including the question of whether the I-2 district is really the best location for them.

Our intent is to have regulations that will address these concerns (and others that we may yet identify) without unduly restricting the development of data centers. After all, we all rely upon these facilities in our day-to-day lives: access to data is now a critical consideration for businesses and part of the high quality-of-life we want for our residents.