

Data Center Considerations

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

JULY 28, 2026

Purpose

To share information and concerns related to the development of a data center ordinance in Lowndes County.

This presentation is not meant to support a case For or Against data centers. Information presented is stated as currently understood by Lowndes County and will be publicly updated as further understood or developed.

Currently

- ❖ No member of the Board of Commissioners, the County Manager or employee of Lowndes County has signed an NDA related to a data center.
- ❖ Lowndes County does not intend to offer or approve local tax abatement options. State or Federal abatements, programs or benefits are beyond local control.
- ❖ Lowndes County has not received a request for plan review, plan consideration or permitting for a data center.
- ❖ To Lowndes County's knowledge, the Valdosta-Lowndes County Industrial Authority (Development Authority) does not have a data center prospect.
- ❖ A private land owner has shared publicly that they are speaking with data center developer DC Blox.
- ❖ Lowndes County is in the process of considering citizen requests, best/worst practices, other local government ordinances and environmental concerns in an effort to protect our community, while remaining supportive of industry as a whole. Data Center Supplemental Standards will be ineligible for Variance Consideration
- ❖ As soon as a data center ordinance is drafted, it will be shared publicly before final consideration.

Zoning

❖ On July 8, 2025, Lowndes County rezoned 719 acres from C-C (Crossroads Commercial) and CON (Conservation District) to M-1 (Light Manufacturing). There were 7 conditions placed on the approval. (REZ-2025-11)

1. There shall be no access to Briarberry Drive and Quail Hollow Circle from the subject property.
2. Should a change in use occur where additional transportation and/or water/sewer infrastructure upgrades are required, the Developer will be responsible for the design, any acquisition of necessary right-of-way, relocation of utilities, and construction costs for the infrastructure improvements.
3. All lots shall front interior roads.
4. A 200' undisturbed buffer shall be required along the Northern, and Southern property lines abutting current Residential Zoning District boundaries.
5. Any lighting located on the property shall be shielded and directed to avoid direct illumination of adjacent properties zoned Residentially.
6. Any loudspeakers, paging systems, or electromagnetic interference generated on or by uses of the property shall be designed, installed and used such that they are not discernable at any abutting property line zoned Residentially.
7. Correctional Facilities, Transitional Care Facilities, and Kennels with Outdoor Runs shall not be allowed.

Zoning – M-1 zoning example uses

- ❖ Agricultural processing
- ❖ Livestock
- ❖ Animal hospitals
- ❖ Vehicle sales/repair
- ❖ Event facilities
- ❖ Freight and moving facilities
- ❖ Warehouses
- ❖ Light industry
- ❖ Indoor and outdoor recreation
- ❖ Research and experimental laboratories
- ❖ Freight terminals by rail or truck
- ❖ Truck stops
- ❖ Other M-1 uses can be found in the ULDC Use Chart (Available Online)

	Industrial and Intensive Zoning Districts			
Zoning Districts: P – Permissible S – Permissible Subject to Supplemental Standards Blank – Prohibited	M-1	M-2 (See Also Section 10.02.05(C))	M-3 (See Also Section 10.02.05(C))	I-S (See Also Section 10.02.05(C))
Land Uses:				
Family Personal Care Homes (4-6 residents) (For an “S” See Also Section 4.03.16)				
Group Personal Care Homes (7-15 residents) (For an “S” See Also Section 4.03.16)				
Hospital, Nursing Homes, and Congregate Personal Care Homes (For an “S” See Also Section 4.03.13)	P			
Transitional Care Facility (For an “S” See Also Section 4.03.27)	S	S		
Correctional Facility (For an “S” See Also Section 4.03.28)	S	S	S	
Agricultural and Farm Operations (For an “S” See Also Section 4.03.02)	P	P	P	P
Agricultural Processing, Sales (wholesale and retail), and Outdoor Storage. (For an “S” See Also Section 4.03.02)	P	P	P	
Commercial Greenhouse and Plant Nurseries (For an “S” See Also Section 4.03.03)	P	P	P	
Stables and Livestock (For an “S” See Also Section 4.03.02)	P	P	P	

Zoning – other zoning categories

- ❖ Heavy Manufacturing (M-2)
- ❖ High Intensity Industrial (M-3)
- ❖ Non-Residential Planned Development (PD/PD-R)
- ❖ Supplemental Standards for Data Centers will be ineligible for Variance Consideration

Of the zoning categories that allow for data center development, M-1 provides for the lowest impact.

Water Consumption & Discharge

Lowndes County's ordinance will require a "Closed Loop" system.

- ❖ Closed Loop systems do not discharge into a waste water system. They work similar to a car's radiator by recirculating water or a water/glycol mixture after an initial fill. Glycol is not a forever chemical.
- ❖ The initial fill can be required by ordinance to be brought in outside of Lowndes County's aquifer.
- ❖ Any wastewater/discharge for maintenance can be required by ordinance to be collected and disposed of outside of Lowndes County.
- ❖ Water consumption for data centers using closed loop systems can be no more than that of "normal office" and landscape irrigation activities.

To note:

Top 5 Industrial Water Users in unincorporated Lowndes County:

- ❖ 43,771,000 gallons annually
- ❖ 42,264,000 gallons annually
- ❖ 15,877,000 gallons annually
- ❖ 7,954,000 gallons annually
- ❖ 4,738,000 gallons annually

Adjacent Subdivision Monthly Usage:

- ❖ 23,000 gallons per month
- ❖ 20,000 gallons per month
- ❖ 16,000 gallons per month
- ❖ 14,000 gallons per month
- ❖ 9,000 gallons per month

- Sampling from 5 streets

A data center with a closed loop cooling system uses 600,000 to 1,000,000 gallons for an initial fill and can use roughly 60,000 annually for routine maintenance.

Forever Chemicals

Fire Protection:

- ❖ DC Blox has communicated to the property owner that the company uses nitrogen generators and compressed air for dry pipe systems in areas of operations and traditional water for administrative spaces.

PFAS:

- ❖ Lowndes County has requested additional information from DC Blox and is still researching this question.
- ❖ Computer hardware can contain small amounts of PFAS.
- ❖ Lowndes County's ordinance can require the disposal or abandonment of servers, computer components or any other personal property housed in a data center to occur outside of Lowndes County.

Sink Hole Risk

All of Lowndes County is at risk for sinkholes. The county sits on a karst aquifer made up of limestone. Water moving through the ground can dissolve limestone over time which can create an underground cavern or cavity that could cause the terrain above to collapse.

- ❖ The size of a hyperscale data center can be 100,000 to 1,000,000 square feet for a large campus
- ❖ The size of a shopping mall can be up to 800,000 square feet.
- ❖ The size of an average Walmart is 180,000 square feet.
- ❖ DC Blox builds centers on average at 31,000 to 70,000 square feet for some locations and up to 750,000 square feet on large campuses with multiple buildings.
- ❖ Lowndes County's data center ordinance will require appropriate studies related to environmental components addressed by federal and state laws, along with expected engineering practices.

Lowndes County does not intend to allow data centers to use cooling systems that would require water usage outside of a closed loop system. The risk of a sinkhole should not be greater for a data center than any other large development.

Power Usage

Specific information related to power usage is most accurately communicated by power providers.

Lowndes County Understands:

- ❖ Georgia Power has approved a “power study” scheduled to begin in September.
- ❖ If power to the site is approved, the developer is required to fund needed infrastructure.
- ❖ Georgia Power has stated that no data center development costs will be passed to residential users.
- ❖ Georgia Power has stated that data centers do not take power priority from residential distribution.

Lowndes County will continue to ask questions regarding power usage and will share any information that is obtained.

Noise

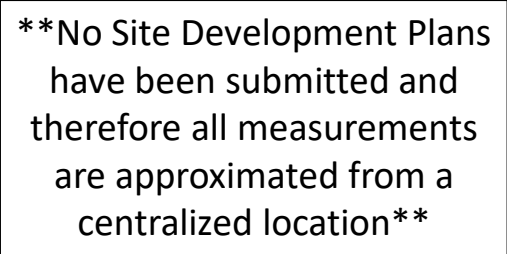
- ❖ Data centers are reported to create noise referred to as a constant mechanical “humming” from large cooling units and/or periodic testing of generators.
- ❖ Lowndes County’s ordinance will strictly address both the decibel and frequency that can be generated by a data center.
- ❖ The conditions approved by the Lowndes County Board of Commissioners also address noise beyond the current language in the Unified Land Development Code (ULDC).
- ❖ DC Blox has demonstrated their approach to eliminating noise discomfort by the use of noise cancelling panels in other communities.
- ❖ There are other allowed uses in M-1 that have the potential to create unwanted noise. These concerns will continue to be addressed by rezoning conditions or during plan review for proposed uses other than data centers on parcels that do not have to be rezoned.

Lighting

- ❖ Large developments can create light pollution.
- ❖ Directional lighting will be addressed in Lowndes County's data center ordinance to include shielding, lumens and color temperature.
- ❖ The Lowndes County Board of Commissioners has already addressed the proposed location during the rezoning process by conditioning that all lighting "shall be shielded and directed to avoid illumination of adjacent properties zoned Residentially."
- ❖ The development of outdoor LED lighting has provided benefits related to directional lighting which has helped in decreasing light pollution when warm color temperatures are used with directional shielding.

Buffers & Distance

- ❖ Lowndes County can address additional buffers and distance to residential properties beyond the current M-1 requirements as part of drafting a data center ordinance.
- ❖ The rezoning of the property in question addressed additional buffering that will be enforced if any project that is allowed in M-1 develops.
- ❖ It is difficult to determine exact distances within required distances prior to the submission of a site plan. Since no project has been submitted, there is no additional information available at this time regarding distances other than what has been conditioned as a part of the rezoning.
- ❖ Other property owners along the North Valdosta Road corridor have verbally expressed interest in retail development as close or closer to residential development in the area. If a retail project is submitted, Lowndes County will address any additional buffering needed for these projects as well.



Review of Citizen Request

PRESENTED BY: DR. M. NOLL

JUNE 23, 2026

Next steps

- ❖ The Lowndes County Board of Commissioners has instructed staff to begin working with the County Attorney to develop a draft Data Center Ordinance for Lowndes County.
- ❖ While the ordinance is not being drafted to eliminate the overall development of data center's entirely, ordinance components will be drafted primarily for the protection of our community instead of what might best benefit a data center development.

Questions

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS PRESENTATION. LOWNDES COUNTY IS GRATEFUL FOR BOTH YOUR INTEREST AND TIME.