

MEETING MINUTES – DRAFT
Prince George's County Qualified Data Center Task Force

Largo HQ
1616 McCormick Drive
Largo, MD 20774
Monthly Meeting: September 10, 2025
1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Task Force Members: Anthony Jones, Ed Burroughs, Wala Blegay, Martin Ezemma, Crystal Carpenter, Victoria Leonard, Darryl Barnes, Justin DeVantier (for Monica Marquina), Mary Giles, Alexis Lewis, Mark Scarano, Staci Hartwell, Brad Frome

Guests: Lakisha Hull, Planning Director, Prince George's County Planning Department; James Hunt, Deputy Planning Director, Prince George's County Planning Department; Rana Hightower, Vanessa Akins, Lisa Kelley, Elaine Asal, Krystal Oriadha

Absent: Griffon Benton, Tom Dennison, Tom Natelli, Michael Stellino, Don Slaiman, David Tilley

I. Welcome, Attendance, Remarks

- The meeting was called to order by CM Ed Burroughs.
- Reminder of purpose of meetings (studying the economic impacts, the environmental impacts, social impacts, and other implications associated with data centers.)
- This meeting: Hear about feedback from three July Community Meetings; hear from representative about how data centers impact electrical systems in the community
- Attendance was taken, and a quorum was confirmed under the Maryland Open Meetings Act.
- CM Burroughs: Spoke directly about data center proposed at Landover Mall site
 - Stated that the task force does not have authority to approve or reject the proposed data center at Landover Mall; its role is strictly advisory, focusing on policy recommendations to the county government.
 - Qualified data centers in the designated M-X-T zone, including Landover Mall, are exempt from District Council review due to a 2021 zoning ordinance change, requiring only planning board approval for preliminary subdivision plans.
 - The Landover Mall data center project has received preliminary planning approval but still needs permits from several agencies; the task force aims to be transparent about this process and will include its analysis in recommendations to the county.
- Mr. Jones: Provided remarks
 - Stated that the task force acts as a think tank for potential data centers in Prince George's County, providing non-binding recommendations to the County Council to guide possible legislation, but has no authority over permitting decisions.
 - Recommendations are informed by community feedback from meetings, input from subject matter experts, and best practices from other jurisdictions, with a focus on protecting residents' health, safety, and welfare while promoting job creation and diversifying the tax base.
 - Though DPIE makes final permitting decisions, the task force will submit recommendations to the County Council that address community concerns, especially for those living near proposed data center sites like Landover Mall.
- CM Burroughs: Stated that as a result of the broad community response today, another opportunity for public participation will be provided in a venue that has the ability to hold as many people as possible. Comments may be emailed, but another opportunity to provide feedback in a meeting setting will be provided.

- Mr. Jones: Stated that task force is making an effort to be as transparent as possible. Reminded everyone about Prince George's County government website to view minutes, videos of meetings, and provide feedback directly.
- CM Oriadha: Shared remarks
 - Thanked residents for attending the meeting despite challenging weather, acknowledged their commitment to advocacy, and noted that their strong turnout prompted the decision to hold another community meeting.
 - Stated that they openly recognize that past county leadership prioritized industry over community interests, resulting in broken trust and decisions made without adequate public input or transparency, particularly regarding the fast-tracking of data center projects.
 - Apologized for previous failures, assured attendees that current leadership is committed to transparency and accountability, and expressed gratitude to the County Executive and Council Chairman for forming the task force to address these issues properly.
- CM Blegay: Provided remarks
 - Stated that the task force was established to promote transparency and ensure community involvement in decisions regarding data centers, emphasizing the importance of informed recommendations and representation from affected areas.
 - Community meetings were held across different regions of the county to gather diverse input, with plans for additional meetings and ongoing communication to further engage residents and incorporate their feedback.
 - Legislative action is being considered to temporarily halt new data centers until the task force completes its recommendations, aiming to prevent rapid, uninformed development and ensure that all voices are heard and concerns addressed.
- Ms. Hartwell: Stated that she emailed the leadership of the task force and copied all task force members, requesting that to hear from The PJM, the Public Service Commission, the Maryland Department of the Environment and another group that represents community voices that have experienced this, in particular the Piedmont Environmental Council. A response has not been received, and those groups are able to give information that is needed to make an informed decision. She requested a comment on whether or not the task force will hear from them.
 - Mr. Jones: Stated that the email was received. The task force is in the planning process, and already has a commitment from PJM, reached out to a delegate but has not heard back from anyone they have emailed.
- CM Burroughs: Acknowledged all elected officials.

II. Discussion

- Mr. Jones: Shared QDC website: <https://pgccouncil.us/1051/Qualified-Data-Center-Task-Force>
 - Recap of previous meeting (no August meeting)
 - July: Community meetings recap (more details in today's meeting); thank you to task force members who attended
 - The minutes from the July meeting were reviewed and approved without objections.
- **Data Center Materials Overview – James Hunt, Deputy Planning Director, Prince George's Planning Department**
 - There were three well-attended community meetings held at different locations in Prince George's County, focusing on data centers and drawing significant interest from local citizens.
 - Discussions covered topics such as land use, design, energy consumption, environmental impacts, and costs related to data centers, with attendees providing valuable feedback and asking numerous questions.
 - Support staff, including planning members, interns from Bowie State University and the University of Maryland, assisted, and the Gensler consultant team will ensure all community comments are transparently recorded and addressed.

- ***Data Center Community Meetings held in July 2025 – Elaine Asal, Gensler***
 - Gensler, in collaboration with the M-NCPPC Prince George’s County Planning Department, led a public engagement initiative to gather community input on data center development.
 - The goals were to explore the benefits and potential impacts of data center development, understand public concerns, and gather opinions to inform future planning and policy recommendations.
 - The public meetings were held in three different parts of the county. Meeting attendance ranged from 37-69 at each meeting.
 - Attendees were engaged through welcome posters and roundtable discussions on various topics related to data centers. Comments and feedback from the public meetings were collected, digitized, and analyzed to identify key sentiments and concerns.
 - Six key community priorities were highlighted: Environmental impact, governance and transparency, economic value, design and aesthetics, zoning clarity and protections, and community reinvestment. Each priority is discussed in detail, including specific concerns and suggested mitigation strategies.
 - Potential community benefits from data center development were outlined, such as workforce development, tax revenue, local partnerships, and infrastructure investments.
 - Site considerations and building design were discussed, emphasizing the importance of sustainable design, noise and light control, and integration with the local community.
 - The final report will assess the impacts and benefits of data center development using community feedback, case studies, best practices, and design expertise. The report is under review and will be presented at the next Task Force meeting on October 8, 2025.
 - Ms. Carpenter: Stated that in a previous task force meeting, she asked if zip code, gender, and race could be collected at the front end of the meetings so data could be aggregated. She asked if this was done.
 - Ms. Asal: Stated that it was attempted to be done through the map because of privacy concerns, in addition it didn’t feel appropriate to as when people were coming in.
 - Mr. Hunt: Commented that there was a concern related to people revealing information and Park and Planning having to hold that information. Stated that the geographic information (where everyone is located) is being captured as much as possible.
 - Ms. Carpenter: Asked if the zip code is being captured.
 - Mr. Hunt: Responded that the mapping can be applied to attempt to catch that.
 - CM Burroughs: Stated that there will be another meeting, and perhaps that could be done at that meeting.
 - Ms. Asal: Stated that every comment is identified (geographically) by the meeting it came from, and no patterns were identified.
 - Mr. Hunt: Stated that the team would be happy to identify zip codes at the next meeting.
 - Ms. Carpenter: Responded that it would be valuable information, given the outpouring of support at the meeting, to know if there was a representative sample at the next meeting.
 - Ms. Asal: Responded that there was a map at the front of the community meetings; it was anecdotal, but gave a heat-map sense relative to attendance.
 - Ms. Hartwell: Stated that since the report will be available for public consumption, there should be definitions around some of the environmental terms, environmental justice, historic wealth, so that people can be aware of what the terms mean.
 - Ms. Asal: Responded that adding glossary of terms could be added.
 - Ms. Leonard: Asked what the participants reaction or thoughts were about the potential for data centers being revenue generators for the county, which have some budget constraints.
 - Ms. Asal: Stated that it was presented upfront and as best they could. Uncertainty was heard around the economic return, and there were a lot of questions. In addition, the job potential came up a lot.

- Ms. Hartwell: Stated that she sent an email to the county requesting to see the proposal/RFP that the county put out because she wanted to know what exactly Gensler was to deliver, and wanted to know if they could include modeling that could suggest the benefits or jobs being offered against the cost to the community.
- Mr. Jones: Noted that the number one concern from the community meetings was environmental concerns. Asked if it was electricity or water at the top.
 - Ms. Asal: Referred back to the environmental impact slide; the top two within that category were energy emissions and water. Water subcategories were water reuse and recycling, water demands and protection. Energy emissions subcategories were energy demand, power source standards, energy innovation.
- Ms. Hartwell: Regarding the proposal back to the county, asked if it was within the scope of work to talk about other technologies that would eclipse data centers or quantum computing. Asked if the report will reflect different opportunities to achieve the same thing with less of an impact to people and the environment.
 - CM Burroughs, directed to Ms. Asal: Stated that she has been tasked with public engagement.
 - Ms. Asal: Responded that the key components of work asked of her and her team is to lead the public engagement meetings, put together a report, and the case study. What can be learned from best practices, and put that together into what it might mean in terms of recommendations from a planning perspective.
 - CM Burroughs: Thanked Ms. Asal for her response.
- Ms. Carpenter: Asked if the taxing structure for the different locations will be compared when the case studies are put together, as that will help to know the benefit.
 - Ms. Asal: Stated that she believed it was included. The intent is to share that.
- ***Environment Impacts on Energy – Mark Scarano, Senior Manager for Economic Development, Pepco***
 - Pepco, an Exelon company founded in 1896, provides reliable and safe power to 890,000 customers in the DC region and employs over 1,400 people locally.
 - The company does not generate electricity but focuses on transmission and distribution with a strong commitment to reliability, sustainability, and safety.
 - Pepco recognizes the challenges of inflation and supply-demand mismatches affecting electricity bills and has established a \$50 million Customer Relief Fund for qualified households.
 - Data centers and large load customers are evaluated carefully for their impact on the grid and community, using a team-based, intentional planning process.
 - The demand for data centers is rapidly increasing globally, driven by trends like artificial intelligence and cloud services; U.S. energy demand for data centers is expected to triple by 2028.
 - Pepco is responsive to community concerns and values local engagement, aiming for open communication and transparency in its operations.
 - Pepco carefully coordinates with multiple internal departments—such as transmission engineering, project management, legal, and real estate—when addressing data center projects in the community.
 - The company is regulated by federal and state agencies, ensuring equitable provision of electricity to all customers, including large data centers, without favoritism.
 - Large load projects (over 50 megawatts) undergo a comprehensive feasibility study, often costing up to \$1 million, to assess their impact on the grid and environment.
 - Pepco now groups large load projects together to evaluate cumulative impacts on the electrical grid and plan necessary upgrades, rather than considering each project individually.

- A new Transmission Security Agreement (TSA) requires incoming large customers to provide a substantial letter of credit covering up to 10 years of projected energy use, protecting ratepayers from stranded infrastructure costs if the project falls short or is abandoned.
- Due to high demand and the need to maintain grid reliability, data centers and similar projects may face waits of 5–6 years before being connected, as the grid must be adequately prepared to handle additional loads.
- Ms. Lewis: Asked how receptive banks are to issuing letters of credit, and asked if any letters of credit have been issued yet.
 - Mr. Scarano: Stated that letters of credit have not been issued yet. Large corporations need to assess their own energy needs and the load ramp they commit to, as infrastructure upgrades are based on these projections. Not every project advances to completion—some drop out or are speculative, and the required \$1 million feasibility study fee helps ensure only serious applicants proceed.
 - Ms. Lewis: Asked what the collateral would be for the security agreement; would the bank have a lien over the substation if the data center developer defaults?
 - Mr. Scarano: Responded that the letter of credit is from the data center's bank, so the bank needs to feel comfortable releasing that letter of credit.
 - Ms. Lewis: Asked how transmission lines are so perfectly straight.
 - Mr. Scarano: Responded that he did not know, but would find out and share the information.
- Ms. Leonard: Asked if the TSA and letters of credit are best practices that other utility/electric companies are using, or is it unique to Pepco. Also asked when a decision is made about large load projects, is the impact on the grid factored in.
 - Mr. Scarano: Answered that they look at their own companies first, realizing that the load sometimes comes from other companies outside of the service area. Transmission lines cover all across America, need to look at the effect of new load and projections on the larger grid as well. Responded to the first question, that there are other utilities engaged in this right now, but Pepco is an early adopter of this. There are some states looking at this.
- Ms. Hartwell: Stated that Pepco is literally and figuratively a powerhouse, they answer to shareholders, and the goal is to maximize profits. Asked if he could break down the LOC and the TSA to the people and tell them what it means to them. Also asked how much of Pepco's largesse is able to be wielded in order to protect the rate payers.
 - Mr. Scarano: Explained the main components of a Pepco electric bill: charges for power generation, transmission, distribution, additional fees. Oversight of these areas is divided between federal and state authorities. Large customers, such as data centers and manufacturers, impact the system. Infrastructure upgrades are made to accommodate their needs, with costs covered by TSAs or letters of credit to ensure that residential customers are not left paying for unused infrastructure if a business leaves after upgrades are made.
- Ms. Giles: Asked how Exelon goes about analyzing the distribution and transmission system to ensure that it can transmit the amount of electricity needed for this big power user without impacting the surrounding community. Also asked if there has been a situation where a data center is built and then the surrounding community starts to go dark.
 - Mr. Scarano: Responded that a phase one feasibility study and phase two advanced engineering and design study takes into account all variables, and focuses on safety and reliability. Every possible scenario is evaluated, including potential disruptions. ConEd has been brought in because they have expertise they can contribute. All of these efforts ensure that the grid remains stable.

- Ms. Giles: Stated that large solar farms have to go to the Public Service Commission to get approval before going forward with local permits. Asked if data centers need PSC approval.
- Mr. Scarano: Responded that the permitting process for power lines and other infrastructure follows standard, established procedures at state and local levels. Data centers are responsible for securing their own permits, including environmental approvals, through county and state channels.
- Mr. Jones: Asked if there is enough electricity generation capacity to meet the needs on the East Coast for all of the data centers that are under development and currently in use?
 - Mr. Scarano: Stated that there is a mismatch between supply and demand. PJM and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission look at that big picture. It's not only in America but international as well.
- Ms. Hartwell: Stated that right now, Landover's capacity is around 820 megawatts. If that does not include cooling, the demand could surge to 1300 megawatts. Asked about the impact that would have on greenhouse gas emissions.
 - Mr. Scarano: Stated that there are issues of confidentiality, and he cannot talk about a specific project when a company comes to Pepco/Exelon.
 - Ms. Hartwell: Stated that she sees a conflict, because they have to answer to their shareholders, but they are also residents of the County. Asked how is Pepco able to influence recommendations that are coming from proposed developers and builders of data centers, because it doesn't serve Pepco to curtail demand.
 - Mr. Scarano: Stated that all of the income that comes from this company, as well as other (for profit utilities) comes from what the state allows. While Pepco is for-profit, it is also made up of community members, and is responsive to public commissions.
 - Ms. Hartwell: Stated that Delegate Janelle Woods will be at the Oxon Hill Library on October 26, and is hosting a meeting. Asked if a representative could attend to address the issue at that meeting.
 - Mr. Scarano: Stated that he will look into it and they can talk later.

1. *Other Topics – Tour of Fredrick County Data Center Site and Discussion*

- Mr. Hunt: Stated that there will be a tour at Frederick County; will provide details via email.
 - Ms. Hartwell: Stated that she would rather hear from the Piedmont Environmental Council.
 - Mr. Hunt: Stated that he will wait to hear direction from the task force.
 - Mr. Jones: Stated that the meeting has gone past time. Thanked everyone for coming, appreciate everyone's concerns and time. Meeting adjourned.