

Comprehensive Plan Amendment #CPA2021- 00004
PW Digital Gateway
Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. I understand that rezoning applications have been filed for properties within the area of the PW Digital Gateway Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA). Was BOCS action taken to approve concurrent processing of the CPA and rezonings, or is it Prince William County policy to proceed with rezoning cases based on speculative Comp Plan actions?** The Board has not taken action to process the CPA and rezonings concurrently, and Board action is not required for concurrent processing. Concurrent processing of CPAs and REZs is not uncommon. In this case, the CPA was submitted last year and is therefore further along in the process.
- 2. There are numerous organizations that have gone on record with their position on the proposed CPA (Fairfax County, US Dept of the Interior, VA Dept of Forestry, Historical Commission, HOA's etc). Is the Planning Office posting these feedback letters on your public website for the project, and what is your policy for doing so?** The Planning Office is posting all comments online that we receive from **County agencies and adjacent jurisdictions**. These comment letters are compiled in the Plan Comments Reports on the following web pages: <https://www.pwcva.gov/department/planning-office/pw-digital-gateway> and <https://egcss.pwcgov.org/SelfService#/plan/3ab68e66-cf4d-4240-84df-15aa8a9f2453?tab=attachments>. Regarding the numerous additional public comments (including from HOAs, elected officials, and private organizations), in general, our office does not have the capacity required to put all public comments online. The case files are open to the public and can be accessed any time during the Planning Offices hours, Monday – Friday 8:00am-4:30pm. Copies can be made according to our fee schedule: (https://www.pwcva.gov/assets/2021-04/photo_copy_charges_list.pdf).
- 3. What is the County's position on the PW Digital Gateway Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA)?**
This CPA is currently being evaluated, and the Planning Office does not have a recommendation on the CPA.
- 4. Where are data centers permitted in Prince William County?**
Data centers are a permitted use in a number of zoning districts in Prince William County. Within the Data Center Opportunity Zone Overlay District, data centers are permitted by right in office and industrial districts [in the O(L), O(H), O(M), O(F), M-1, M-2, and M/T zoning districts] and in designated office or industrial land bays in the PBD and PMD district. Outside of the Data Center Opportunity Zone Overlay District, data centers are permitted subject to special use permit approval in commercial, office, industrial districts, and mixed-use districts. Data centers are prohibited in agricultural, residential, PMR, B-2, B-3, and V districts. More information on the data center opportunity overlay district requirements in the Zoning Ordinance may be found by clicking [HERE](#).
- 5. How can data centers be considered outside of the Data Center Overlay District?**
Data centers are not prohibited outside of the Data Center Opportunity Zone Overlay District. Outside of the Data Center Opportunity Zone Overlay District, data centers are permitted subject to special use permit approval in commercial, office, industrial districts, and mixed-use districts. In order for data centers to be constructed in the areas around Pageland Lane, these sites would first need to be rezoned to a zoning district that would allow data centers. Proffers associated with a rezoning in a planned district (ex. PBD) might also state that data centers are a permitted use without a special use permit, in which case the requirement for a separate special use permit could be superseded. If the site is not added to the Data Center Opportunity Zone Overlay District, and the rezoning does not address the special use permit requirement, then a separate

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special use permit would also be required to approve data centers on Pageland Lane.

The Planning Office makes recommendations on specific rezoning and special use permit requests based on a proposal's consistency with the County's Land Use Plan in the Comprehensive Plan. The pending Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) request for the PW Digital Gateway study area was submitted to amend the County's land use policies in this area. This CPA is currently being evaluated, and the Planning Office does not have a final recommendation on the CPA. Any future rezoning request for data centers would be evaluated for consistency with the County's Comprehensive Plan.

6. Why are data centers being considered on Pageland Lane and not in the Data Center Opportunity Zone Overlay District? How much land is in the Data Center Opportunity Zone Overlay District? Is the existing overlay adequate?

The Data Center Opportunity Zone Overlay District continues to be an active area for data center development.

The Comprehensive Plan is the Board's adopted land use policy. The Board can at any time, initiate changes to their land use policy. Sometimes the Board does this unilaterally and sometimes they do it at the request of an applicant. The PW Digital Gateway initiative came after the request of an applicant.

The Data Center Opportunity Zone Overlay District is a zoning designation in the Zoning Ordinance, which is different than the Comprehensive Plan. At the time the Data Center Overlay study was last adopted by the Board of County Supervisors, the Data Center Opportunity Overlay District included a ±9,523-acre overall land area. Excluding public rights-of-way (i.e. roads), the overlay includes ±8,712 acres of individual properties.

Separately from the PW Digital Gateway Comprehensive Plan Amendment, the Board initiated an expansion to the zoning overlay district, which is still ongoing. In the Board's initiation of the Data Center Opportunity Overlay District Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA), the Board directed staff to evaluate whether the existing overlay is adequate. This study is ongoing and a final answer to this question has not been determined.

To address the question regarding adequacy of the overlay from an economic development perspective, the Executive Director of the Department of Economic Development provided a Market Viability Review dated May 27, 2021. Based on the preliminary analysis at that time, the memo concluded, as of the date of issuance of the memo, that within the overlay approximately 600-1,110 acres are considered market viable (available to sell to a data center user looking for sites in Prince William County). A link to that memo is [HERE](#).

7. Where can I find more information about the PW Digital Gateway project for amending the Comprehensive Plan along Pageland Lane to allow data center uses?

Comprehensive Plan Amendment #CPA2021-00004, PW Digital Gateway, has its own project webpage, which can be found here: pwcva.gov/department/planning-office/pw-digital-gateway.

PW Digital Gateway is a request to create a technology corridor along Pageland Lane for the development of data center uses. On July 20, 2021, through Res. No. 21-445, the Prince William Board of County Supervisors initiated an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan for PW Digital Gateway to change the Long Range Land

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Use from AE, Agricultural or Estate and ER, Environmental Resource to Technology / Flex (T/F) with a T-3 Transect to include related impacts on supporting infrastructure and consider alternative comparable land use designation options that meet the needs of the Applicant and the priorities of the Prince William Board of County Supervisors. Additionally, the Prince William Board of County Supervisors approved an expanded study area, to include the entire corridor between Route 29 and Sudley Road in order to review in a holistic manner (traffic, land use, and environmental concerns), and directed staff to look carefully at the areas directly abutting Conway Robinson Memorial State Forest and the Manassas National Battlefield Park, and coordinate the review with the open space corridor concepts of the rural area (native plant buffering and sustainability) to preserve as much of the area as possible.

The Applicant has proposed to limit new development to only data centers.

8. Where can I find comments from a specific agency that reviewed the project?

Following submission of an application the package is sent to relevant agencies for review and comment. Typically, this review phase last 3-4 weeks after which all comments received are compiled into a Comments Report. This report is available to the public on the applications [ePortal](#) page and the [project webpage](#). This report is intended to consolidate the comments received for consideration and incorporation into future submissions. Applications can typically undergo several iterations of the review process with each submission having a comments report outlining agency comments.

9. What are proffers and what is the significance of proffers for this Comprehensive Plan Amendment?

Proffers are a form of conditional rezoning. Proffers are conditions voluntarily offered by an applicant to mitigate the impacts associated with a rezoning request. Proffer agreements are reviewed and negotiated as part of the rezoning application and may be approved by the Board of County Supervisors. Once approved by the Board of County Supervisors, proffers become legally binding conditions that are associated with the property and define the parameters in which development can occur. Proffers are only associated with rezoning requests. A Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) is a request to change the Long-Range Land Use designation of the Comprehensive Plan, which is the Board's land use policy guide. CPA's do not contain proffers. The Comprehensive Plan contains policies, goals and action strategies that are used to negotiate proffers associated with a rezoning application.

10. What environmental studies are being completed with the Comprehensive Plan Amendment?

In accordance with § 15.2-2224, Code of Virginia various surveys and studies, including environmental studies are consulted in evaluation of the Comprehensive Plan. The County uses a variety of existing surveys and studies in its evaluation including, but not limited to, floodplain, Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas, soils, topography and tree cover. This information is available in the County's GIS system and is viewable on County Mapper. The Planning Office reviews this information in collaboration with the County's Environmental Services division to ensure all environmental resources are identified and inform policy recommendations to ensure environmentally sensitive features are protected. Subsequent rezoning applications will be required to submit a more detailed Environmental Constraints Analysis (ECA) which shows specific site conditions. More information can be found in the [Reference Manual for Rezoning, Special Use Permit, and Proffer Amendment Applications](#).

11. How much water do data centers use?

In a response from the Service Authority in November 2021, they indicated that data center water consumption varies depending on several factors, including but not limited to the size of the facility, the

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cooling technology used and outdoor temperature. Based on Service Authority records for 25 operational data centers in Prince William County, the average daily water consumption of a single data center building is about 18,000 gallons per day while the maximum day consumption of a single data center building is about 88,000 gallons per day. The amount of water data centers consume also fluctuates based on seasonal weather conditions. Facilities typically use less water during the winter months and more during the summer months. Currently, the combined water consumption of the operational data centers in Prince William County accounts for about 1.5% of the Service Authority's average-day demand and about 3.9% of the Service Authority's maximum-day demand.

The Applicant states: "most data centers are migrating to closed-loop or zero water cooling systems. In either case, only domestic water usage is required (i.e. – sinks and toilets). If refrigerant is used, it is maintained in a separated, sealed line and only opened for a controlled recycling process. The Service Authority water usage estimates appears to be based upon historical data from existing data centers that mostly use older water-assisted cooling systems".

12. If data centers are approved, who will pay for extension of water and sewer lines into the Pageland Corridor?

In accordance with the Service Authority's Development Review Process and System Improvement Policy, "growth pays for growth". The applicant/developer, and not the Service Authority's existing customer base, would be responsible for the design and construction of the infrastructure necessary to serve their development through any approved zoning requests. All proposed development projects are reviewed by the Service Authority to determine if the existing water distribution, sewer collection systems, and pump stations are adequate to meet the projected water demands and wastewater flows. Deficiencies will be identified, and the applicant will be notified of their requirements to meet the Service Authority's established performance standards for service. The applicant would be required to pay for the extension of water and sewer lines into the Pageland Corridor as a part of the rezoning, development review and construction process.

13. What is the status of the County's water study?

Separately from this CPA request, the Board of County Supervisors directed County staff to evaluate the need for a study to determine the potential impact of land use and impervious area changes on groundwater. The Public Works Director responded to this directive with a memo to the Board. As stated in the memo dated November 22, 2021, from the Director of Public Works, the Virginia Department of Health has not reported any concerns regarding wells going dry or water quality in groundwater aquifers in the County. According to the Prince William County Service Authority, sufficient public water supply is available to serve the County's population to at least 2040. The memo also indicated the cost of a study.

At the time of this writing, the Board has not initiated nor funded a groundwater study. A link to a memo provided to the Board of County Supervisors on this topic is provided on the project page and [HERE](#).

A study on groundwater was not included in the Board's initiation of the CPA.

The Applicant has proposed that data center redevelopment be required to abandon and remove all wells and septic fields pursuant to Health Department regulations.

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14. I have concerns about the impacts of new development on the Occoquan Watershed and the Occoquan Reservoir? What is the County doing to protect the Occoquan Reservoir?

Separately from this CPA request, on November 17, 2020, the Board of County Supervisors issued Directive No. 20-86 for staff to develop, with public input and direction, a protection overlay district for the Occoquan Reservoir to be included in our County Zoning Ordinance. A link to a memo provided to the Board of County Supervisors on this topic is provided [HERE](#).

As stated in the memo dated November 22, 2021, from the Director of Public Works, the County will be updating its Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area regulations, based on the recent changes in the State regulations. Additionally, the County will be receiving a new updated MS-4 Permit in June 2022 that will further strengthen the County's stormwater management standards. Considering these forthcoming changes in stormwater standards, staff recommends that the County focus on actively engaging with all stakeholders in addressing salinity as a region. The County staff will continue to actively participate with technical experts in addressing these challenges to understand and implement cost effective measures. Staff does not recommend an overlay district to address salinity, the specific pollutant of concern for the reservoir, at this time.

15. Is there enough power?

As stated in a response from Dominion Energy, NOVEC would construct electric facilities of sufficient capacity to meet the electric requirements of any prospective NOVEC data center customers (the PW Digital Gateway is wholly within NOVEC's distribution service territory). NOVEC would request Dominion Energy to interconnect these NOVEC facilities to Dominion Energy's regional transmission network. Dominion Energy, as owner of the regional transmission facilities, would determine the availability of transmission system capacity.

Dominion Energy has an obligation to serve its customers (NOVEC in this case) and meet any new power needs from the community. Dominion Energy will continue to evaluate capacity needs in line with current federal standards and rules governing electric transmission reliability criteria, such as megawatt load on lines and substations.

16. Will there be new substations and transmission lines?

As stated in a response from Dominion Energy, a final decision has not been made by Prince William County regarding the total acreage that could be available for data center development in the PW Digital Gateway. Accordingly, NOVEC cannot determine at this time the specific electric infrastructure needed to support data center development in the PW Gateway but will construct facilities of sufficient capacity necessary to meet the data center electric requirements which could include the construction of new substation facilities.

Generally speaking, and dependent on how the PW Digital Gateway is developed over time, Dominion Energy expects that new substations and transmission lines will be necessary to meet NOVEC's needs.

17. What are the tax implications of PW Digital Gateway? As I understand it, PWC has the potential of creating hundreds of millions of dollars in commercial tax base on an annual basis. Is this true?

Based on an evaluation done by Prince William County Finance Department, the estimated tax revenue impact of the PW Digital Gateway application is projected to be approximately \$400.5M, including real

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estate and business tangible property tax. Full comments from the Finance Department are available in the 2nd Submission Comments Report: [HERE](#).

18. What is the Bi-County Parkway (Rt 234 North Extension)?

The Bi-County Parkway is also known as Rt. 234 North Extension (Rt. 234 N. Ext.) between I-66 and Loudoun County and the alignment was formerly shown in the County's Thoroughfare Plan. This Primary Arterial first appeared in the Thoroughfare Plan of the Comprehensive Plan in the early 1990's. This facility was a limited access facility with interchanges at I-66, Sudley Road and Rt. 50 in Loudoun County and was designed to relieve traffic on Rt. 15. This roadway also served as the north-south segment of the Manassas Battlefield Bypass which was designed to shift traffic out of the Manassas Battlefield Park in conformance with the National Park Service's General Management Plan to prohibit through traffic on Rt. 29 and Sudley Road in the Park. The primary function of the Bi-County Parkway as originally planned was to serve inter-county traffic between Prince William County and the Dulles Corridors in Loudoun and Fairfax Counties.

The Planning Commission recommended removal of the Bi-County Parkway from the Thoroughfare Plan at its meeting on February 17, 2016. The Board of County Supervisors removed the Bi-County Parkway from the Thoroughfare Plan in 2016. County Staff and VDOT recommended against removing this facility without a thorough analysis of the surrounding road network. At that time, it was thought that a Thoroughfare Plan update would be initiated within the year when the termini/function of the Manassas Battlefield Bypass, the Rt 29 alternate road and Rt. 29 and Sudley Road through the Park could be analyzed. The County is currently updating the Thoroughfare Plan and the Bi-County Parkway was going to be analyzed on several different alignments with several functional classifications, i.e. limited access roadway or primary/minor arterial with intersections. However, on March 1, 2022, the Board directed staff to remove analyzing the Bi-County Parkway from its current work program of the Mobility Plan update. The surrounding network will continue to be analyzed. All analyses will be dependent on the Planning Office's Land Use recommendations and Board of County Supervisors' decisions for the corridor. Note that VDOT's VTRANS, MWCOC's Constrained Long Range Plan and NVTA's TransAction continue to show the Rt. 234 N. Ext. as a Corridor of Statewide Significance.

19. What is the relationship between PW Digital Gateway and the Bi-County Parkway (Rt 234 North Extension)?

There is no correlation between PW Digital Gateway and the Bi-County Parkway. The traffic related to the CPA will need to be mitigated in some way. The Bi-County Parkway was a regional facility that was to connect two interstates. When shown on the County's Thoroughfare Plan, Pageland Lane and the Bi-County Parkway were not the same facility. They were two distinct and separate facilities serving two different purposes. The applicants for any rezonings in this area will need to mitigate traffic impacts. PW Digital Gateway's analysis stated that a 4-lane Pageland Lane as a minor arterial with six signalized intersections between Sudley Road and Rt. 29 could handle the traffic generated by its development, and therefore it did not include a model run including the Bi-County Parkway. The analysis has been submitted and is currently under review by VDOT and the County.

VDOT requires a traffic analysis to be included with all Comp Plan Amendments. The scoping meeting was held in November 2021 with VDOT and the Applicant's traffic engineer. The scope included a model

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run with an analysis of the Bi-County Parkway if the analysis showed that local improvements could not manage the traffic impacts. The Bi-County Parkway is not in the current Thoroughfare Plan; therefore, staff will not be requiring a travel demand model run to include the Bi-County Parkway as mitigation to the proposed development.