

January 7, 2026

Supervisor's Community Update

Preparing Springfield Township for Data Center Development

From the Desk of Ric Davis
Springfield Township Supervisor
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As your Township Supervisor, I want to share with you the steps we are taking to proactively plan for the possibility of data center development in Springfield Township.

Data centers are large facilities that store and process digital data for everything from businesses and hospitals to banks, governments, and online services. They are part of a growing national and global infrastructure trend—and some communities have seen rapid development as companies look for new locations.

While data centers can bring investment and infrastructure to a region, they also come with unique risks and responsibilities. They use large amounts of energy, produce substantial heat, may rely on backup diesel generators, and require secure access. Most importantly, they are considered critical infrastructure and may become targets for terrorism, cybercrime, or sabotage.

In Springfield Township, we believe in being prepared before problems arise, and balancing growth with public safety and sustainability.

Moratorium Passed: Giving Springfield Time to Do It Right

At the December 11, 2025 meeting of the Springfield Township Board, we passed a resolution establishing a temporary moratorium on data center applications. This action gives us the time we need to:

- Study the impact of these facilities

- Engage with public safety and utility partners
- Write zoning ordinances and standards that are enforceable, fair, and protective
- Ensure community input is part of the process

With this moratorium in place, we are in a far stronger position than many other communities that were forced to react to data center proposals without time to develop thoughtful, comprehensive ordinances. We are using this time wisely—to plan, to coordinate, and to prepare for development that serves the best interest of Springfield Township.

What We're Doing to Prepare

1. Creating Clear Ordinances and Protective Zoning

We are in the process of developing ordinance language that will:

- Define where and how data centers can be built through a Critical Infrastructure Overlay District
- Require threat and vulnerability assessments for any proposed facility
- Establish minimum safety, security, environmental, and visual impact standards
- Ensure developments are set back from residential areas, with appropriate screening and noise mitigation
- Require a Community Risk Mitigation Plan as part of the permitting process

These ordinances are not meant to discourage development—but to ensure that any project aligns with Springfield's values, priorities, and public safety standards.

2. Fortifying Construction and Infrastructure Requirements

Any proposed data center would need to meet rigorous standards drawn from national best practices, including:

- FEMA, NFPA, and ASCE building codes for blast resistance, emergency access, and fire protection

- Secure and redundant utility lines and control systems
- Physical fortification of mission-critical components like backup power, servers, and cooling systems
- Compliance with cybersecurity frameworks to protect interconnected infrastructure and digital systems

These standards ensure the safety of our first responders, nearby neighborhoods, and township utilities.

3. Protecting the Township's Environmental and Utility Resources

Data centers have large footprints—not just in square footage, but in their impact on water, electricity, and stormwater systems. Our ordinances will address:

- Water usage limits, especially on evaporative cooling systems
- Compliance with EPA and state environmental regulations
- Noise and emission limits for backup generators
- Stormwater systems that protect the watershed and surrounding environment
- Requirements for all necessary environmental impact studies to be submitted, reviewed, and factored into the approval process

We will require full utility impact studies to understand how a project would affect our power grid, water system, and emergency service capacity.

As Supervisor, I want to be clear: we will require a complete understanding of the environmental implications of any data center proposal. We will make the protection of our community first and foremost in every part of our review and approval process.

4. Preparing Our Emergency Services and Community

Springfield's Fire, EMS, and Law Enforcement teams are already among the most professional and dedicated in the region. Under our approach, they will receive:

- Specialized training to respond to incidents at secured or high-voltage facilities

- Access to emergency plans, maps, and hazardous materials inventories submitted by developers
- Participation in multi-agency drills with facility operators to prepare for active threats, fires, or major system failures.

5. Requiring Transparency and Annual Reporting

Trust is earned through openness. As Supervisor, I will require any data center operator in Springfield to:

- Submit annual updates on security, emergency response plans, and system inspections
- File a hazardous materials inventory and environmental impact review
- Maintain open communication with the Township and public safety agencies

These reports will help ensure compliance—and maintain the transparency our residents expect and deserve.

Learning from Other Communities

We have studied examples from communities that have already faced rapid data center expansion, including:

- Loudoun County, Virginia – where over 70% of the world's internet traffic flows daily
- Mesa, Arizona – which requires cooling system efficiency and water conservation
- Santa Clara, California – with cybersecurity integration and energy demand limits
- Douglas County, Georgia – which mandates emergency access and hazardous materials reporting

Springfield's approach takes the best of these models and adapts them to fit our local character and capacity.

Final Thoughts: Smart Growth, Safe Future

Let me be clear: this is not about saying “no” to development—this is about saying “yes” to responsible growth. If a data center developer approaches Springfield Township, we will be ready—with zoning, policies, and a community-first mindset already in place.

With the moratorium in effect, we are planning from a position of strength. We are not rushing to keep up—we are setting the pace, taking the time to get this right, and protecting the long-term interests of our residents, our environment, and our infrastructure.

We will require complete environmental and utility impact studies, detailed emergency preparedness plans, and transparency from any developer. The protection of our community—its health, its safety, and its resources—remains our highest priority.

This is how we protect:

- Our neighborhoods
- Our first responders
- Our natural resources
- And our future

I will continue to update you as we move toward finalizing these ordinances. And as always, I welcome your thoughts and questions.

With appreciation,
Ric Davis
Supervisor
Springfield Township