MONROE TOWNSHIP
CUMBERLAND COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

ORDINANCE NO. 2026-XX

AN ORDINANCE OF MONROE TOWNSHIP, CUMBERLAND COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AMENDING SECTIONS 305(1), 3.06(B), 6.02(A) AND TABLE 3.01 OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE ADOPTED ON SEPTEMBER 12, 2024, REGARDING DATA CENTERS AS CONDITIONAL USES AND PERMITTED ACCESSORY USES FOR DATA CENTERS IN THE HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL ZONES

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors of Monroe Township has determined that it is appropriate to amend the Township's Zoning Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors of Monroe Township is empowered to enact and amend zoning provisions under the grant of powers by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Act 247, "The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code," July 31, 1968, as amended, hereinafter referred to as "MPC".; and

WHEREAS, this Ordinance is intended to guide future growth and development by regulating land uses within Monroe Township for the improvement of the health, safety, and general welfare of its citizens. It is therefore enacted and ordained by the Board of Supervisors of Monroe Township, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, as follows:

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Article I. Add New Definition to Section 6.02(A) as follows:

Ambient Noise Level: The baseline environmental noise at a site prior to development, measured by a qualified acoustical engineer over a continuous 72-hour period (including one weekend day), using ANSI standards.

Backup Generator: Natural Gas, diesel, hydrogen fuel cells, Power Storage System, or other non-coal equipment used to generate electricity during a power outage or similar emergency. Backup generators are only to be used during periods of outages, natural disasters, or similar “emergency events” for power generation and for regular reliability testing and exercising.

Data Center: A facility or group of facilities, including its ancillary uses or associated structures located on the same tract or parcel of land, that is predominantly used to house working servers or similar data storage systems and has uninterruptible energy supply or generator backup power, or both, cooling systems, towers, and other temperature control infrastructure, consisting of a building or buildings which are occupied primarily by computers and/or telecommunications and related equipment where digital information is processed, transferred, and/or stored, primarily to and from offsite locations. This use does not include computers or telecommunications related equipment that is secondary and customarily incidental to an otherwise permitted use on the

property, such as servers associated with an office building. This use shall also include cryptocurrency mining, blockchain transaction processing, and server farms. A Data Center may include limited office space associated with facility operations but does not include general business offices or call centers.

Data Center Accessory Use: Ancillary uses or structures secondary and incidental to a Data Center use, including but not limited to: administrative, logistical, fiber optic, office and security buildings or structures; storage, renewable energy systems; sources of electrical power such as generators used to provide temporary power when the main source of power is interrupted, electrical substations; domestic and non-contact cooling water and wastewater treatment facilities; water cooling or holding facilities; pump stations; water towers; external environmental controls (emission controls, noise pollution controls, environmental impact monitoring); internal environmental controls (air conditioning or cooling towers, fire suppression, and related equipment); security features, provided such data center accessory uses/structures are located on the same tract or assemblage of adjacent parcels developed as a unified development with a Data Center.

Data Center Equipment: The necessary items housed in a Data Center or associated structures located on the same tract or parcel of land for the use including, but not limited to, working servers or similar data storage systems, generators, cooling systems, towers, and other temperature control infrastructure, computers and/or telecommunications and related items where digital information is processed, transferred and/or stored, primarily to and from offsite locations, and e-Waste. This does not include computers or telecommunications related equipment that is secondary and customarily incidental to an otherwise permitted use on the property, such as servers associated with an office building. Data Center Equipment does not include the building shell, lighting, access drive, landscaping, or buffering.

Operator: The person or entity responsible for the post-construction operation of a Data Center.

Sensitive Receptors – A land use, facility, or population group particularly vulnerable to the negative impacts of noise, vibration, air pollution, and light pollution. For the purposes of this Chapter, Sensitive Receptors shall include, but are not limited to: public and private schools, preschools, all day care facilities, health facilities such as hospitals and clinics, nursing, rest or retirement home, or medical residential campus, church or religious institution, playgrounds, public parks, kennels, veterinary office, animal rescues, community centers, historical sites, or any residence where such residence is not located on a parcel with an existing industrial or commercial zoning district. Furthermore, these protections shall not apply to any Sensitive Receptor established adjacent to an approved Data Center after the date of issuance of the Data Center's certificate of occupancy.

Article II. Add Subsection 10 to Section 3.05(1) as follows:

10. <u>*Data Centers:*</u> Data Centers shall comply with the following regulations:

    a. The Pre-Application Review requirements specified in Section 302 of the Monroe Township Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance shall be required for a Data Center.

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b. *Minimum Setback Requirements:* The following minimum setback standards are required for all Data Centers, Data Center Accessory Uses and parking and loading areas associated with the Data Center use . These requirements supersede the requirements of the underlying zoning district.

Yard	**Setback from Uses or Parcels that do not contain Sensitive Receptors**	**Setback from Sensitive Receptors** **Building Gross Floor Area** **Under 100,000 SF**	**Over 100,000 SF**
Front	100 feet	300 feet	500 feet
Side	60 feet	300 feet	500 feet
Rear	100 feet	300 feet	500 feet
Building to Building	50 feet		

c. *Screening:* All screening shall be in accordance with Section 4.13 of this Ordinance and the following requirements:

(1) Location and Screening of Mechanical Equipment: All mechanical equipment shall meet the following standards in addition to those required by Section 4.29 of this Ordinance:

(2) Mechanical equipment shall be fully screened on all sides with acoustical screening placed to shield the direction of emitted sound. Such visually **solid** screen shall be constructed with a design, materials, details, and treatment compatible with those used on the nearest principal facade of the building.

(3) Perforation for Ventilated Screening: Acoustical screening for mechanical equipment may incorporate perforated surfaces on screening walls as necessary to permit ventilation of mechanical equipment.

(4) Height of Screening of Principal and Accessory Structures:
An earthen berm averaging a minimum of fifteen (15) feet in height above the adjacent average ground level with a maximum side slope of 3:1, provided that the berm shall be covered by a well-maintained all-season natural ground cover and any required screening plantings shall be arranged on the outside and top of the berm. Vegetative screening materials shall be selected based on mature plant heights in relation to the height of the principal or accessory structure and separation distance to provide visual

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screening of the use. A plan prepared by a Registered Landscape Architect shall be submitted with Conditional Use application.

(5) Truck loading and/or maneuvering areas and dock doors shall not face a residential use or district or a public street.

h. *Buffer Yard:* A buffer yard of 300 feet shall be required between parking areas and other accessory uses as measured to adjacent residential uses or along adjoining lands containing a Sensitive Receptor. Vegetative screening shall be placed in the buffer yard.

(1) Within the required buffer yard, a fifty-foot-wide landscape screen is required. The berm shall be covered by a well-maintained all-season natural ground cover and any required screening plantings shall be arranged on the outside face and top of the berm.

(2) Stormwater management facilities may be located within the buffer yard but not within the required landscape screen.

(3) The landscape screening may be located within the required building setback lines.

(4) No impervious surface is permitted within the landscape screening aside from access drives, sidewalks, and associated improvements.

(5) Utilities should be located outside of the landscape screening to the maximum extent it is feasible.

(6) Where a lot line drainage or utility easement is required, the screening yard shall be measured from the inside edge of the easement.

(7) Landscape screening shall not include environmental encumbrances such as, but not limited to, wetlands, wetland transition areas, streams, riparian buffers, and flood hazard areas.

(8) Plantings in the landscape screening shall include a minimum of two rows of dense screens of evergreen and deciduous trees having a minimum height of 8 feet above the top of the berm.

(9) Plant material within landscape screening plantings shall meet the following requirements:

a. Shall be arranged in groupings to allow for ease of maintenance and to provide a natural appearance.

b. Shall be chosen to ensure year round vegetation.

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TO BE CONTINUED AT THE NOVEMBER 2026 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING.

Monroe Township
Proposed Data Center Ordinance Text Amendment
2026.09.25

Article	Section #	Subject	Proposed Ordinance Amendments	Reference
I	-	Definitions	Revision and addition of several definitions to provide clarification on regulated use	Resident/Township
II	3.05(1).10.c	Setbacks	Added setbacks from Senstive Receptors based on building size	Resident/Township
II	3.05(1).10.e	Lot Coverage	Removed to avoid conflict with underlying districts	Township
II	3.05(1).10.f	Height Limitations	Removed to avoid conflict with underlying districts	Township
II	3.05(1).10.g	Screening	Revised to provide for 15' high berm	Resident/Township
II	3.05(1).10.h	Buffer Yard	Revised to provide for 300' buffer yard from Sensitive Receptors	Resident/Township
II	3.05(1).10.i	Noise		
II	3.05(1).10.j	Lighting		
II	3.05(1).10.k	Aesthetic Treatments		
II	3.05(1).10.l	Energy		
II	3.05(1).10.m	Water, Sewer & Wastewater		
II	3.05(1).10.n	Cooling System Requirements		
II	3.05(1).10.o	Safety		
II	3.05(1).10.p	Emergency Management Response		
II	3.05(1).10.q	Environmental & Community Impact Anaylsis (ECIA)		
II	3.05(1).10.r	Environmentaal Impact Assessment		
II	3.05(1).10.s	Threatened & Endangered Species		
II	3.05(1).10.t	Riparian Forrest Buffer		
II	3.05(1).10.u	Parking		
II	3.05(1).10.v	Expansion Cap		
II	3.05(1).10.w	Violations, Compliance & Enforcement		
II	3.05(1).10.x	Decommissioning/Removal		
II	3.05(1).10.y	Community Benefits Agreement		

II	3.05(1).10.z	Performance & Mitigation		
III	Table 3.01	Permissible Uses		
VI	-	Additional Provisions		