

ADOPTED BY THE  
MAYOR AND COUNCIL ON

August 5, 2026

ORDINANCE NO 12268

RELATING TO PLANNING AND ZONING; AMENDING THE TUCSON CODE, CHAPTER 23B, UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT CODE, SECTIONS 4.9.11, and 11.3.11; AND SETTING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

**WHEREAS**, the City of Tucson has experienced increasing interest in the development of large-scale data centers, which present unique characteristics and potential impacts not adequately addressed by the use and development standards currently set forth in the Unified Development Code; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and Council find that the establishment of specific zoning standards for large-scale data centers is necessary to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of Tucson residents, and to ensure compatibility between such development and surrounding land uses through an appropriate approval pathway; and

**WHEREAS**, in August 2025 the Mayor and Council held a study session to direct City staff to revise relevant portions of the Unified Development Code (UDC) in order to develop zoning regulations for large-scale data centers; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission held a publicly noticed meeting on the proposed text amendment on June 3, 2026, and voted 6-2 on a motion to forward a recommendation of approval to the Mayor and Council on the proposed regulations for large-scale data centers; and,

**WHEREAS**, Because the motion received six and not seven concurring votes, the Planning Commission did not make a formal recommendation of approval or denial on the proposed code amendment to Mayor and Council as required in Rule IV(K) of the Rules of Procedure of the Planning Commission 6; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Tucson acting through public meetings and hearings, citizen participation and in conjunction with the Planning Commission, a Technical Advisory Committee, and various other stakeholders, City staff have conducted a complete review of, and amendments and revisions to, the UDC at Articles 4, and 11;

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TUCSON, ARIZONA AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The Tucson Code, Chapter 23B, Unified Development Code, Article 4, Zones, Section 4.9, Use Specific Standards, is hereby amended to read as follows:

**UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT CODE  
ARTICLE 4, ZONES  
SECTION 4.9.11, UTILITIES USE GROUP**

**4.9.11. UTILITIES USE GROUP**

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**D. Large-Scale Data Centers**

1. The Large-Scale Data Center site shall be located a minimum of:
  - a. 2,640 feet (one-half mile) from the following residential zones: RX-1, RX-2, MH-1, MH-2, R-1, R-2, and R-3.
  - b. 2,640 feet (one-half mile) from all educational and residential uses, or similar uses as determined by the Zoning Administrator.
  - c. 1,000 feet from all commercial and office zones.
  - d. Other uses such as natural areas, riparian corridors, or open space may warrant a separation distance of up to 2,640 feet (one-half mile), as determined by the Zoning Administrator in consultation

with other City of Tucson staff based on review of the required Environmental Resource Report.

2. A Large-Scale Data Center shall not exceed 50 feet in height.

3. Sound

- a. Facility must comply with Section 16-31, *Excessive Noise*, of the Tucson Code.
- b. Baseline noise study and noise contour exhibits are required as part of the application. The study is to be signed and sealed by an independent acoustic engineer and shall address both decibels and frequency, including infrasound.
- c. Sound blocking and screening for generators and other noise-producing mechanical equipment are required through solid screened walls or rooftop screening.
- d. A noise mitigation plan is required with the submittal of a building permit application that demonstrates compliance with the following minimum standards:
  1. Proposed generators must be for backup use only, with a preference for low-emitting (less than or equal to 100kg CO<sub>2</sub>e/kW) models. Where high-emitting generation is proposed, only Tier IV, or natural gas / dual fuel generators are permitted.
  2. Backup energy shall be provided by a combination of generators and batteries. Storage must be sized to provide 2-hours of typical data center operations. Storage and low-emitting backup generators must be used prior to high-emitting generators to support data center operations when disconnected from the grid.
  3. Ability to disconnect electrical load from the grid system at the request of the servicing electric utility.
  4. Certification that generator operation will occur only at the request of the electric utility, during grid instability or power outages or for preventive maintenance and periodic testing.
  5. Certification that non-emergency maintenance operations will be limited to 9 am – 5 pm MST, Mondays through Fridays.
  6. Upon request by City staff after issuance of a certificate of occupancy and commencement of the operation of the data center, the operator of a data center must provide an on-site neighborhood liaison to be available between the hours of 8:00 am and 10:00 pm Mountain Standard Time (MST) each

day to respond to complaints about noise emanating from the Data Center.

4. Certification of access to an adequate energy supply and documentation of the proposed energy mix, including what renewable energy sources are being utilized, is required at the time of application submittal.
5. Water
  - a. Certification of access to an adequate water supply is required at the time of application submittal.
  - b. Development must comply with the Large Quantity Water Users Ordinance, if applicable. If not applicable, the use of potable water for data center cooling is prohibited.
6. Enhanced landscape borders (per UDC Section 7.6.4.) of 40 feet are required.
7. An Environmental Resource Report (ERR) is required. The ERR shall identify the most appropriate area for development. Lot coverage is limited to 40% and the remaining land area shall be dedicated as natural open space and reserved in perpetuity, unless an offsite mitigation plan with a minimum 2 to 1 offset of land area is approved through the PAD/PCD. Salvage of native plants shall be permitted on the development area. Any disturbed area shall be revegetated with native plants.
8. No minimum parking is required. Applicant shall submit a parking statement justifying the amount of parking needed for the use.

Notice for all required neighborhood meetings and public hearings shall follow Section 3.2.4 Public Notice. However, the requirements shall follow the Public Notice and Procedural Requirements for a Rezoning to Establish a PCD (Table 3.2-1) which requires notice to recipients within 2,640 feet (one-half mile) of the boundaries of the proposed rezoning site and to all neighborhood associations within two miles of the boundary.

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SECTION 2. The Tucson Code, Chapter 23B, Unified Development Code, Article 11, Definitions and Rules of Construction, Section 11.3., Definitions of Land Use Groups, Classes, and Types, is hereby amended to read as follows:

**UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT CODE**  
**ARTICLE 11: DEFINITIONS AND RULES OF CONSTRUCTION**  
**SECTION 11.3.11. UTILITIES USE GROUP**

The Utilities Use Group includes Land Use Classes that involve the generation, transmission, and/or distribution of basic services, such as sanitation, water, gas, and electrical services. The following Land Use Classes constitute the Land Use Group.

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**F. Large-Scale Data Centers**

Any facility, multiple facilities, or portion of a facility on a contiguous site, and a gross floor area greater than 25,000 square feet or uses greater than 20 megawatts (MW) of energy, housing networked computer systems and/or telecommunications equipment used for remote storage, processing, and distribution of data. Large-Scale Data Centers are permitted through adoption or major amendment of a Planned Area Development (PAD) or a Planned Community Development (PCD) and are subject to Use Specific Standards 4.9.11.D.

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SECTION 3. If any provisions of this Ordinance, or of its application to any person or circumstance is declared invalid or unenforceable, as determined by a court of competent jurisdiction, the invalidity or unenforceability shall not affect other provisions or applications of this Ordinance which can be given effect without the invalid provision or circumstance, and to this end, the provisions of this Ordinance are severable.

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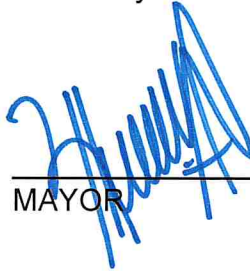
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SECTION 4. This Ordinance becomes effective thirty (30) days after it is adopted by the Mayor and Council and is available from the City Clerk.

PASSED, ADOPTED, AND APPROVED by the Mayor and Council of the City of Tucson, Arizona, August 5, 2026.

  
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MAYOR

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
CITY CLERK

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
CITY ATTORNEY

REVIEWED BY:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
CITY MANAGER

JA/tt  
07/22/2026