

TO: Cannon Falls Planning Commission
FROM: Izzy Carlson, License and Permit Technician
DATE: July 21, 2025

**SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF
CANNON FALLS, MINNESOTA AMENDING CITY CODE
AMENDING CITY CODE §152 DEFINING DATA CENTERS, AND
ALLOWING THEM AS A CONDITIONAL USE WITHIN CERTAIN
ZONING DISTRICTS.**

BACKGROUND

A Public hearing has been scheduled with the Planning Commission of the City of Cannon Falls for Monday, July 21, 2025, to consider an Ordinance of the City of Cannon Falls, Minnesota amending City Code Chapter 152 relating to zoning.

Staff have been working with Tract and their consultants Kimley-Horn, evaluating the opportunity to construct a technology park within an area of our City that is planned for industrial development in our comprehensive plan. There have been multiple studies, including an Areawide Urban Alternative Review (AUAR), citywide water distribution and wastewater equipment evaluations, discussion with the Township over annexation, and an application outlining the requested land use decisions to accommodate and guide the development of data centers within the Technology Park. In evaluating our process of our ordinances, the City Administrator and City Attorney have determined that an amendment must be made in to the ordinances to ensure the City can fully evaluate any data center application within Cannon Falls, the Council must first define data centers, and establishing the conditions in which the City will allow an application for any to be considered by the Planning Commission and City Council. In short, we must bring data centers into existence within our City code, if we do not, the appropriate procedure would be to deny any data center use, due to it not being defined in the code as a permitted or a conditional use.

The addition of data centers within the City code will coincide with conditions and requirements to be placed upon developments within and data center project. It is important to consider that this amendment is not a review of Tract's application, that will occur if and when the ordinance is approved and goes into effect. Additionally, allowing the use of a data center as a conditional use, will be valuable to maintain the City's enforce regulatory compliance, ensure protections and mitigation plans are implement in their development, and keep the City in control of the allocation of the resources under our responsibility, like, water, wastewater and storm water.

The following exhibit is enclosed to further describe the proposal:

1. Amended Ordinance

Staff Recommendations

Staff recommends approval of this ordinance amendment

REQUESTED COUNCIL ACTION

Please consider and make a motion to approve of Ordinance NO. ____, to define data center and allow them as a conditional use within certain zoning districts.

ORDINANCE NO. ____

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF CANNON FALLS, MINNESOTA AMENDING
CITY CODE CHAPTER 152 RELATED TO ZONING

THE CITY OF CANNON FALLS ORDAINS AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. City Code Section 152.021 is amended by adding the underlined language, as follows:

* * *

DATA CENTER. A facility used primarily for the storage, management, processing, and transmission of digital data which houses computer or network equipment, systems, services, appliances, and other associated components related to digital storage and related operations. Such facility may include the following accessory uses, all of which together with the facility to which they serve constitute the Data Center:

Access (public or private);

Buildings for support offices, storage, logistics, maintenance, and security;

Enclosed energy, battery and fuel storage facilities;

Public and private water and wastewater facilities;

Water treatment facilities;

Water storage and cooling facilities and associated water pumps, tanks, and equipment;

Communication, broadband, and fiber optic utilities;

Air handlers, cooling equipment, and heat pumps; and

Electrical generators.

DATA CENTER SUBSTATION. An electric power transforming and/or switching station that provides electrical services to a Data Center and may include electric generation, distribution, switchyard, and transmission facilities.

Section 2. City Code § 152.688(M) is amended by adding the underlined language as follows:

(M) Data Centers, provided that:

(1) Public sanitary sewer, water, and storm sewer services with adequate infrastructure and capacity) are or will be available to serve the Data Center as determined by the City Engineer;

(2) Water, wastewater, and stormwater systems approved as to design and capacity by the City Engineer shall be installed;

(3) All applicable State Pollution Control Agency, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Health, and Department of Transportation requirements are met to the City's satisfaction;

(4) All mechanical equipment and electrical equipment, other than telecommunications equipment serving the Data Center, is housed in mechanical yards that are fenced and screened in accordance with City Code;

(5) Except as provided in this section, outdoor storage of equipment related to operation of the Data Center must be landscaped, fenced and screened from view of neighboring uses, abutting residential zoning districts and public rights-of-way in compliance with City Code;

(6) The Data Center is fully enclosed by a fence as approved by the City;

(7) Vehicular access points shall create a minimum of conflict with traffic movement and shall be subject to approval of the City Engineer;

(8) All exterior lighting shall be in compliance with § 152.187 of this chapter and a comprehensive lighting plan approved by the City. The maximum site illumination shall not exceed four-tenths foot candle at ground level when measured at any boundary line of the property; except that temporary construction lighting and lighting on access roads at the property boundary shall be exempt;

(9) The site contains adequate parking as determined by the City;

(10) Provisions acceptable to the City are made to control and mitigate noise, light, air and water pollution so as to not unreasonably disturb or interfere with surrounding property owners' use and enjoyment of their property;

(11) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the City Code, the requirements of City Code § 152.688(M) apply to Data Centers located within planned unit developments; and

(2) The City, when evaluating a formal request for a conditional use permit pertaining to a specific site prior to approval, upon finding that the general welfare and public betterment can be served as well or better, may add to, modify or expand the conditions set forth herein.

(N) Data Center Substation, provided that:

(1) All applicable State Pollution Control Agency, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Health, and Department of Transportation requirements are met to the City's satisfaction;

(2) All Data Center Substations are located on the same site as the Data Center that it serves;

(3) The number of Data Center Substations serving a Data Center are limited to those necessary for operating the Data Center;

(4) The requirements in §§ 152.385 through 152.389 are satisfied to the City's satisfaction;

(5) Provisions acceptable to the City are made to control and minimize noise, light, air and water pollution so as to not unreasonably disturb or interfere with surrounding property owners' use and enjoyment of their property;

(6) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the City Code, the requirements of City Code § 152.688(N) apply to Data Center Substations located within planned unit developments; and

(7) The City, when evaluating a formal request for a conditional use permit pertaining to a specific site prior to approval, upon finding that the general welfare and public betterment can be served as well or better, may add to, modify or expand the conditions set forth herein.

Section 3. This ordinance shall become effective upon its passage and publication.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Cannon Falls, Minnesota, this _____ day of _____, 2025.

Matt Montgomery, Mayor

ATTEST:

Jon Radermacher, City Administrator