



PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, September 21, 2026 • 7:00 p.m.

West Branch City Council Chambers, 110 N. Poplar St.

Council Quorum May Be Present

<https://zoom.us/j/5814699699>

or dial in phone number 1-312-626-6799 with Meeting ID 581 469 9699

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Approve Agenda/Move to action.
 - a. Approve minutes from the July 28, 2026 meeting.
4. Public Hearing/Non-Consent Agenda. /Move to action.
5. Discussion
 - a. Data Center Ordinance draft and setting a Public Hearing Date
 - b. Ordinance changes around Public and Private Parks
 - c. City of West Branch Comprehensive Plan
 - d. Update from the Mayor on Phase IV
6. City Staff reports
7. Comments from Chair and Commission Members
8. Next regular Planning & Zoning Commission meeting Tuesday, November 24, 2026.
9. Adjourn

Planning & Zoning Commission Members: Chair John Fuller, Vice Chair Ryan Bowers, Brad Bower, Matt Van Scoyoc, Madison Conley, Emilie Walsh, Ryan Foley • **Zoning Administrator:** Terry Goerdts
Mayor: Roger Laughlin • **Council Members:** Mike Horihan, Colton Miller, Chantry Noel, Jerry Sexton, Tom Dean
City Administrator: Adam Kofoed **City Clerk:** Alycia Friis • **Fire Chief:** Gary Savona • **Police Chief:** Greg Hall
• **Public Works Director:** Matt Goodale

City of West Branch Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting
July 28, 2026
West Branch City Council Chambers, 110 North Poplar Street

Chair John Fuller called the (Special) Planning & Zoning Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Commission members present: John Fuller, Brad Bower, Emilie Walsh, Matt Van Scoyoc, and Ryan Foley. Not Present: Ryan Bowers

Council members present: None

City Staff present: City Administrator, Adam Kofoed, Zoning Administrator, Terry Goerd

Developers: Brian Shay

APPROVE AGENDA/CONSENT AGENDA/MOVE TO ACTION.

Motion by Walsh, second by Bower to approve the agenda. Motion approved 6-0

PUBLIC HEARING/NON-CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Review and Approve Site Plan for Parkside Hills, 5th Edition, Lot 3 – Parkside Partners Development./ Move to Action

Jon Marner of MMS spoke on behalf of the developer's team. Jon said very few changes were made from the last meeting's map. Changed the main road from a 2.5 cross slope to a crown which made some changes with stormwater occur in the map. Dumpster location was changed. Cobi Hershberger the developer explained some of the building changes like enclosing the hallways and stairs. They will still be LP smart board buildings like the last ones. Colors will be changed to more wood like looking colors to change up the atmosphere between the multiple buildings. Foley asked if there was anything more Dave Schechinger, the engineer wanted added. Kofoed explained that there was a meeting two weeks prior and the developers had met those requirements. The commission agreed it was a good idea to switch up the building colors and designs. Van Scoyoc asked about renting and ownership. They will be primarily for rentals due to how federal regulations regulate subprime backed mortgages. Hershberger did say they were condoed out and could still be purchased. There were good comments about the landscape plan.

Motion by Van Scoyoc, second by Foley to recommend a site plan before going to council. 6-0, motion failed.

Comments from Chair and Commission Members, staff

Goerd explained that Brown's was working on their addition and was hoping to see a final building inspection completed soon.

Adjourn

Motion by Bowers, second by Fuller to adjourn the Planning & Zoning Commission meeting. Motion carried on a voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

Submitted by:
Adam Kofoed
City Administrator

CEDAR COUNTY ORDINANCE draft #5

AN ORDINANCE REGULATING THE PLACEMENT OF DATA CENTERS ON PROPERTY LOCATED IN THE UNINCORPORATED AREAS OF Cedar County, Iowa.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE CEDAR COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

SECTION 1. PURPOSE.

The purpose of this Ordinance is to establish guidelines for the siting, design and construction of Data Centers and Cryptocurrency Mining or Production Centers used for the storage, management, processing, equipment placement and transmission of digital data and therein, for the decommission of these facilities. In addition, the purpose of this Ordinance shall be to promote public health, safety, comfort and general welfare, and to avoid unintended impacts on resources, adjacent land uses, and the environment, while facilitating economic opportunities for rural residents from electronic data. The requirements of this Ordinance shall apply to all Data Centers after the effective date of this Ordinance.

SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS.

Battery Energy Storage System (BESS): A type of energy storage system technology that uses one or more batteries to store and distribute energy in the form of electricity for use at a later time.

Clean Agent Fire Suppression System: A system that uses electronically nonconductive gaseous agents that do not leave residue upon evaporation to extinguish fires.

Closed-loop Cooling System: A sealed system where a coolant circulates continuously, absorbing heat from a source, and then transferring that heat to a heat exchanger for removal, without the coolant ever being exposed to the environment.

Commercial Cryptocurrency Mining: The commercial process by which cryptocurrency transactions are verified and added to the public ledger, known as the block chain, and the means through which new units of cryptocurrencies are released through the use of server farms. Any equipment requiring a high-density load service, for the purpose of operating a cryptocurrency mining farm, will constitute a commercial cryptocurrency mining operation.

Cryptocurrency: A digital currency in which encryption techniques are used to regulate the generation of units of currency and to verify the transfer of funds while operating independently of a central bank.

Cryptocurrency Data Center: Leased or owned property or boundaries of floor space therein, devoted to the operation of data processing equipment for commercial cryptocurrency mining but not including space for data centers not otherwise engaged in commercial cryptocurrency mining, commercial offices, storage, shipping and receiving, warehousing, or any space that is not electronic processing.

Cryptocurrency Server Farm: Three (3) or more interconnected computers housed together in a single facility either air-cooled or water-cooled, whose primary function is to perform cryptocurrency mining or associated data processing and transactions.

Data Center(s): A facility consisting of one or more buildings (whether constructed simultaneously or in separate phases) that is used primarily for the storage, management, processing, and transmission of digital data, which houses computer or network equipment, systems, servers, appliances, batteries, backup generators, cooling equipment and other associated components related to digital data storage and operations. Data Centers includes commercial cryptocurrency mining operations and processing and modular data center systems and facilities. This also includes Data Warehouses.

Data Center, Ancillary: A facility of networking computer servers for private use by an industrial user and is subordinate and accessory to primary use. Ancillary Data Centers are limited to 20% of the building square footage on a site and a maximum power draw of nine (9) Megawatts (MW).

Small-scale Data Center: A facility (data center) that has an electrical design capacity of 20 MW or less, and that uses less than 50 gallons per minute of water or less for cooling purposes on an annualized basis in a closed loop system. For the purposes of determining compliance with power and water usage thresholds in this ordinance, all data center buildings that are part of a phased or multi-building site shall be evaluated in the aggregate, regardless of whether such buildings are constructed simultaneously or in separate phases.

Large-scale Data Center: A facility (data center) that has an electrical design capacity greater than 20 MW or that uses more than 50 gallons per minute on an annualized basis. For the purposes of determining compliance with power and water usage thresholds in this ordinance, all data center buildings that are part of a phased or multi-building site shall be evaluated in the aggregate, regardless of whether such buildings are constructed simultaneously or in separate phases.

Data Mining: The commercial process by which volumes of data are analyzed to find patterns, discover trends, and gain insight into how the data can be used will constitute a commercial data mining operation.

High-Density Load Service: Any individual service at or above six hundred sixty (660) amps in which the energy use intensity (EUI) is calculated as greater and two hundred fifty (250) kWh/Feet²/year in total for all operating square footage.

Liquid Cooling System: A method of cooling electronic components or other devices by circulating liquid coolants through them, to cool and absorb heat from components and then dissipate heat through a radiator.

Places of Public Assembly: A building or facilities where people gather for civic, educational, religious or cultural purposes including, but not limited to retirement and nursing homes, schools, churches, hospital, licensed daycare, public library, detention facilities or human service facilities or other place of public gathering, not including facilities allowed as an accessory use to the principal use in question.

Project: The proposed or existing development including, but not limited to, the use of the land, power, all permits, and construction and use of the site for all forms of Cryptocurrency server farms, Data Centers and BESS sites.

Residence: A house, apartment or other shelter that is the abode of a person, family or household.

SECTION 3. PERMITTED LOCATIONS.

A Cryptocurrency Data Center and/or a BESS are a Special Permitted Use, as provided in the Cedar County Zoning Ordinance No. 10, ~~in the A-1 Agricultural District, C-2 Highway Commercial District, the M-1 Light Industrial District and the~~ in the M-2 Heavy Industrial District.

A Special Use permit will be considered upon determination that all applicable conditions of this Ordinance are met. Special Use Permit applications are submitted to the Cedar County Board of Adjustment for action after review and recommendation by the Cedar County Planning and Zoning Commission as provided in Chapter 17.18(2) of the Cedar County Zoning Ordinance accompanied by a fee established by the Cedar County Board of Supervisors and payable to the Treasurer of Cedar County, Iowa.

SECTION 4. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CRYPTOCURRENCY DATA CENTER(S)/SERVER FARM.

The applicant for a Special Use Permit for the siting and construction of a Cryptocurrency Data Center and/or a BESS shall file an application, as provided in Chapter 17.18(2) of the Cedar County Zoning Ordinance accompanied by a fee as established by the Cedar County Board of Supervisors and payable to the Treasurer of Cedar County, Iowa. Each Cryptocurrency, Data Center or BESS or Server Farm project will require a separate application.

- a) In addition to the submittal requirements defined for Special Use Permit applications, all applications for a Data Center and Cryptocurrency Operations shall submit the following information (as applicable).
 - i) A project **description and** summary, including to the extent possible, a general description of the project, anticipated electrical and water usage, **the approximate number of employees**, and including a description of the Applicant, Owner and Operator, including their respective business structures and contact information.
 - ii) The name(s) of the project applicants and their contact information.
 - iii) The name(s) of the project owner and their contact information.
 - iv) The name(s) of the real property owner and their contact information.
 - v) **The legal description and address of the project location and any other properties leased or owned, that are identified to be part of the project area.**
 - vi) A Site Plan including the size of the property, location of all property lines, right-of-way easements, point of access onto the State of Iowa or County Road system, the location and extent of fences, stormwater infrastructure, parking areas, landscaping screening, the location and setback distances of all structures, points of all electrical, telecommunication, and water utility connections.
 - vii) A project development timeline which includes how the applicant will inform adjacent property owners and interested stake holders in the community and if the applicant will provide a community engagement meeting for the public.
 - viii) A project development plan for the project with aerial photographs of the entire project area.
 - ix) A complete list of adjoining property owners of the site, to a distance not less than one thousand three hundred and twenty (1,320) feet from any boundary line.
 - x) Documentation of the Applicant's legal control over the private properties necessary for the project, signed by the property owner.
 - xi) Documentation of the proposed impact(s) for all electrical customers on the affected local substation including but not limited to rate hikes, peak rates, etc..**

- xii) Written approval of the proposed electrical provider verifying that the applicant has calculated the maximum potential electrical consumption of the proposed use and has verified the utility supply equipment and related electrical infrastructure is sufficiently sized and can safely accommodate the proposed use during the power provider's peak consumption hours.
- xiii) Operation and maintenance plan. The applicant shall submit a detailed plan for the operation and maintenance of the facility including measures for safe access to the site.
- xiv) Lighting plan. A lighting plan shall be submitted providing details of the light spread and intensity diagrams, fixture specifications and mounting height details. Any lighting used for outdoor illumination on the property shall be full-cutoff fixtures so that light does not shine upward nor adversely impact adjoining properties.
- xv) A description of the backup power plan describing the fuel source and expected usage of any standby, backup, or temporary power generation systems. The plan shall identify the anticipated number and size of generators or other power units, anticipated testing frequency and duration, anticipated noise and emission control measures, and anticipated fuel storage or delivery methods. The plan shall demonstrate that the data center will comply with all applicable local, state and federal permitting requirements.
- xvi) Site and structure requirements.
- xvii) A written report prepared by a qualified third-party, [selected and approved by the county](#), analyzing the noise profile of the project area and the ability of the project to demonstrate compliance. The expense for testing and reporting the results to the County shall be the responsibility of the applicant.
- xviii) A Noise Mitigation Plan as part of an Acoustical Analysis.
- xix) An Ice mitigation report for all public rights-of-way and neighboring properties approved by the Cedar County Engineer and adjoining property owners.
- xx) Emergency Response Plan including Fire and Electrical Safety following current federal regulations. A copy of the approved Emergency Operations Procedures shall be provided by the Owner/Operator, to the Cedar County Emergency Management Administrator (EMA), [Cedar County Emergency Medical Services](#), Cedar County Sheriff, area Fire Department(s) and the Cedar County Engineer.
- xxi) Stormwater management plan.
- xxii) Stormwater pollution prevention plan.
- xxiii) Erosion and sediment control plan.
- xxiv) A Detailed Decommissioning Plan.
- xxv) [Data center applicant shall be responsible to pay all fees incurred by the county to retain third party engineering and architectural firms to review plans.](#)

SECTION 5. SITING APPROVAL APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS.

In addition to all submittal requirements of a site plan and Special Use Permit application, the application for a Data Center and/or a BESS shall include the following information on the site plan or in narrative form, supplied by the applicant, owner, operator or contractor developing the site and installing the structures.

- a) Lot Size: The minimum lot size shall be at least five (5) acres net.
- b) Setbacks: All structures used for Data Centers operations shall be setback a minimum of two hundred (200) feet from all right-of-way and property lines and shall be at least [one thousand \(1000\) feet as measured from the closest outer wall of the closest building on the data center property to the closest outer wall of a place of public assembly and to the property line of any occupied structures used for](#)

residential purposes, including residentially zoned properties within city limits. The Board of Adjustment, in consultation with the Cedar County Board of Supervisors, and in consultation with any impacted city, may reduce this setback with a majority vote. Impacted city means any city with residentially zoned property with 1,000 feet of the closest outer wall of the closest building on the data center property.

- c) Utility Connections: On-site power and communication lines between on-site system(s) shall be placed underground to the extent feasible and as permitted by the servicing utility. The main service connection at the utility company right-of-way, and any new interconnection equipment, may be located above ground. Power and Communication lines from on-site system(s) to interconnections with structures off-site shall be buried underground to the extent feasible and as permitted by the serving utility.
- d) Renewable Power Use: The Operators shall certify that at least twenty-five (25) percent of total power consumption is sourced from on-site power generation sources.
- e) Fire Safety: The applicant shall show a determination from the local fire department that the site can be reasonably serviced.
 - i) Areas within ten (10) feet of structures used for data centers shall be cleared of combustible vegetation and other combustible growth.
- f) Water Usage: The application shall provide information on the intended source of water for the development and include an estimate of the annual water usage at the site. Approval of large-scale data center projects requires the applicant to demonstrate there is a sufficient, reliable water supply to meet all projected water demands without undue adverse impacts on existing users, aquifers, or watersheds. To demonstrate this, the applicant shall submit a water study. The purpose of this requirement is to demonstrate, at the planning-level, that sufficient water resources are available to support the proposed use without causing undue adverse impacts to existing water users, groundwater resources, or surface water systems. This study shall describe the proposed water sources(s), anticipated ranges of water demand, assumptions regarding cooling technologies, efficiency measures, system reliability considerations, and general contingency approaches to water supply interruptions and emergencies. The plan shall be prepared by a qualified professional and shall contain sufficient information to allow the County, reviewing bodies, and the public to understand and evaluate the potential water impacts of the proposed use. Documentation from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) will also be provided to the County affirming sufficient water resources exist to serve the site.
- g) Cooling System: All Data centers shall be required to have a liquid cooling system.
 - i) A closed loop cooling system will be required and will include a plan, reviewed annually, for water preservation, recycling and methodology for containment, treatment and disposal of all wastewater.
- h) Equipment: All Data Center production equipment (computers, servers, etc.) shall be enclosed within a structure or structures that comply with all zoning district requirements and building setbacks.
- i) Structure: All structures shall be secured onto concrete foundations.
 - i) The structure(s) shall not be defective, decayed or corroded.
 - ii) The use of cargo/shipping containers, railroad cars, semi-truck trailers, hoop-type fabric or metal storage containers for any component of the operation is prohibited.

- iii) All structures shall be subject to bulk and height regulations of structures in the applicable zoning district except where otherwise approved.
 - iv) Soundproofing of the structure walls to reduce noise levels as per sub-section I.
 - v) A clean agent fire protection system must be provided and maintained in good working order within any structure which contains components of a Data Center. High sensitivity smoke detectors shall be installed and maintained in operational order to activate the clean agent fire suppression system. A record of annual inspection of the fire suppression system and smoke detectors shall be performed and kept available for inspection upon request by the local fire department or the Cedar County EMA.
- j) Screening and Fences: An NEC compliant security fence of eight (8) feet in height with self-locking gate must be installed surrounding all structures and maintained in good condition during the operational period of the Data Center. A landscape buffer may be required to be installed and maintained during the operational period. Determination of the screening requirements will be made as part of the review and approval process and will be based on adjacent or nearby land uses, topography and for viewing by law enforcement.
- k) Signage: All Data Centers and/or BESS shall post at all access points signage which provides the 24-hour emergency contact information. This includes the company name, owner/representative name, telephone number, the local power company name and telephone number.
- l) Noise: Audible noise caused by Data Center operations, not including existing ambient noise, shall not exceed sixty (60) dB continuously during daytime hours (7:00 am – 9:59 pm) or a nighttime (10:00 pm – 6:59 am) continuous sound level of fifty (50) dB, as measured at the property line of the Data Center in both dBA and dBC. The owner/operator shall provide Operating Sound Pressure Level measurements from a reasonable number of sampling locations at the perimeter of comparable Data Center operations to demonstrate compliance with this standard at the time of permitting.
- i) Equipment testing, maintenance activities, and construction activities that generate elevated noise, including generator testing, shall be limited to the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, unless otherwise approved by the Zoning Administrator.
 - ii) In the event the audible noise due to a Data Center contains a steady pure tone, such as a whine, screech, hum, or vibration, the standards for audible noise set forth shall be reduced by five (5) dB.
 - iii) Audible noise caused by the operation of a Data Center shall not exceed forty (40) dB for more than five (5) minutes within an hour, when measured at the closest exterior wall of any residence or occupied community building existing on the date of approval for the Special Use Permit.
 - iv) In the event the ambient noise level (exclusive of the development in question) exceeds the application standard given above, the application standard shall be adjusted so as to equal the ambient noise level. The ambient noise level shall be expressed in terms of the highest whole number sound pressure level in dB, which is exceeded for more than five (5) minutes per hour. Ambient noise levels shall be measured at the closest exterior wall of potentially affected existing residences and/or occupied community buildings. Ambient noise level measurement techniques shall employ all practical means of reducing the effects of generated noise at the microphone.
 - v) The average hourly decibel level may be exceeded during short-term events such as severe wind storms.
 - vi) A pre- and post-construction noise evaluation shall be completed by a certified professional by the Institute of Noise Control Engineering (INCE), or by a licensed Professional Engineer (PE) to verify compliance with the standards of subsection I. The post-construction noise evaluation shall be completed after completion of all planned data center buildings at the end of the construction project.

vii) Commencing on the fifth anniversary of the end of construction, as defined hereafter, and continuing every five years thereafter, for so long as the data center operates, a noise evaluation shall be completed at the operators expense by a certified professional of the Institute of Noise Control Engineering (INCE) or a licensed Professional Engineer (PE) to verify compliance with the standards of sub-section I. Completion of all data center buildings, or end of construction, means the date on which all of the following have occurred: completion of the construction of the data center or, in case of a phased or multi-building campus, all buildings of the multi-building data center campus; and the data center operator has communicated in writing, to the Zoning Administrator that it has completed the data center campus; provided that, if all construction has stopped on the property for more than six (6) consecutive calendar months, other than due to delays by the County in processing related permits or approvals, then "end of construction" as used herein shall be deemed to have occurred as of the last day of the calendar month. This six-month time frame may be extended by the Zoning Administrator or zoning commission in the absence of an administrator.

vii) The Board of Adjustment can require additional pre-and-post construction noise modeling studies to define the area around the Data Center where the possibility of legitimate complaints may exist. This area will be defined as any existing residences or occupied community buildings where noise created at the site could exceed forty (40) dB.

viii) In the event the noise levels resulting from the operation of Data centers exceed the criteria listed above, a waiver to said levels may be granted by the Board of Adjustment providing the following has been accomplished:

- (1) Written waiver(s) from the affected property owner(s) has been obtained clearly stating that they, the property owner(s), voluntarily agree, and are aware of the Data Center and the noise limitations imposed by this Ordinance, and that consent is granted to allow measured noise levels to exceed the maximum noise limits otherwise allowed.
- (2) If the owner/operator desires the waiver to apply to succeeding property owner of the affected properties, a permanent noise impact easement shall be recorded in the Office of the Cedar County Recorder which references the property so affected.

Upon receipt of a written complaint regarding a violation of the noise standards in sub-section I, at a residence or occupied community building within the forty (40) dB area, the owner/operator shall test for compliance with the noise limits of sub-section I. Within sixty (60) days of receipt of a written complaint about noise under sub-section I, the owner/operator shall provide results of the noise test, and if the results show that the noise exceeds the limits established under sub-section I, the owner shall take immediate action to bring the operation into compliance with sub-section ~~II~~ I. Such remedial action may include operational curtailment to eliminate the noise until the operator corrects the problem. The Board of Adjustment may require immediate operational curtailment within the sixty (60) day study period in the event of extreme disturbance to surrounding residences or occupied community buildings.

- a. Ice Mitigation Report: Any Data Center shall ensure that the amount of heat that is dissipated by the operation shall be monitored when the average daily air temperature is forty (40) degrees Fahrenheit or less to ensure that there is no ice buildup on neighboring properties and roadways.
 - i. In the event/instance that moisture condensation and ice occur, there shall be an agreement between the Data Center owner(s) or operator(s) and the affected neighboring property owner(s), and the Cedar County Engineer or Iowa Department of Transportation to mitigate ice on the public right-of-way.

- b. Emergency Procedures and Response Plan: The applicant, owner/operator of the Data Center, shall have a written Emergency Action Plan containing as a minimum, the following:
- i. The establishment and maintenance of liaison with representatives of Cedar County and the area emergency response jurisdiction for rescue and fire to create effective emergency plans.
 - ii. Contact information for the EMA and the appropriate emergency response jurisdiction. The EMA must be contacted within one-half hour (30 minutes) of any emergency.
 - iii. Duties and responsibilities of the **facility representative responsible for the management of the following plausible contingencies that could occur at the facility: natural disaster/severe weather, fire, security incident, capacity/transmission, environmental, chemical, pipeline (if applicable), and medical. It shall include procedures for a site evacuation, designated egress routes and emergency staging areas and coordination plan with area** emergency response personnel in the event of an emergency.
 - iv. A **detailed narrative** listing the types of emergencies, and the **response** procedures for handling the different types of emergencies.
 - v. **The plan shall include a stand-alone section detailing the emergency response protocols specific to battery energy storage areas (if applicable).**
 - vi. **The plan shall be developed on coordination with local first responders, Cedar County Emergency Management and Cedar County Public health personnel.**
 - vii. The twenty-four (24)-hour Emergency Action Plan must include twenty-four (24)-hour contact information for all Data Center and/or BESS Emergency operations personnel and shall be updated with Cedar County Emergency Management annually, or within forty-eight (48) hours of any changes to the emergency contact(s).
 - viii. **The Data Center is responsible for supplying county/city fire departments with equipment and training related to special chemical or metallurgical materials that are in the data center.**
 - ix. **Notwithstanding anything in this section to the contrary, the applicant may redact confidential or proprietary information from any subsection here under. Unless it pertains to chemical properties of processes that would require metallurgical specialty fire fighting equipment in which case the owner/operator will work with the county attorney regarding a NDA to discuss.**
- c. Compliance with County, State and Federal standards:
- i. The Owner/operator shall comply with all applicable Cedar County Environmental Health requirements and all other applicable local, state and federal regulations.

SECTION 6. INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION AND ROAD USE AGREEMENTS.

- a) Roads. The applicant, owner/operator shall identify all roads to be used for the purpose of transporting the structures, equipment, substation parts, cement, and/or equipment for construction, operation, or maintenance and applicable weight and size permits from the impacted road authority(ies) prior to construction.
- b) Existing Road Conditions. The applicant shall conduct a pre-construction baseline survey, in coordination with the impacted local road authority(ies) to determine existing conditions for assessing

potential future damage. The survey shall include photographs and a written agreement to document the condition of the public facility. The applicant, owner/operator is responsible for on-going road maintenance and dust control measures identified by the Cedar County Engineer during all phases of construction. The applicant, owner/operator is responsible for any costs required to repair roads to pre-construction baseline condition. Cedar County reserves the right to halt operations if road conditions deteriorate to a point that creates a hazard to the public as determined by the Cedar County Engineer.

- c) Drainage System. The applicant, owner/operator shall be responsible for the immediate repair of damage to public drainage systems stemming from the construction, operation, maintenance or decommissioning of the Data center and/or BESS. Any development plan must provide documentation that the project will not negatively affect the operation of existing agricultural drainage tiles on adjacent properties.
- d) Performance Bond or Equivalent Financial Instrument. The applicant, owner/operator shall be responsible for restoring or paying damages as agreed to by the applicable road authority(ies) sufficient to restore the road(s) and bridges to preconstruction conditions. A performance bond or equivalent financial instrument, approved by the Cedar County Attorney's Office, covering one hundred thirty (130) percent the costs of all required improvements. This requirement may be waived by the Board of Adjustment by written recommendation from the Cedar County Attorney and the Cedar County Engineer.

SECTION 7. DISCONTINUANCE, DECOMMISSIONING AND ABANDONMENT.

- a) The application must include a decommissioning plan submitted in a form satisfactory to the Zoning Administrator and shall be reviewed and approved by the Cedar County Attorney, Cedar County EMA and Cedar County Engineer. The site shall be considered "discontinued use" if after the Data Center is in operation, following a continuous one-year period in which no data is gathered or utilized or if substantial action on the project is discontinued for a period of one year. Once declared to be a discontinued use, the permit holder will have one year to complete the decommissioning, including complete removal of all equipment and to restore the site of the facility. Decommissioning shall be in accordance with the approved decommissioning plan. The owner or operator of the Data Center shall notify Cedar County within thirty (30) days of the facilities' discontinuation. The Cedar County Attorney, EMA, Engineer and Zoning Administrator shall determine when the decommissioning has been completed.
- b) The Decommissioning plan shall contain:
 - The plan must describe the anticipated life of the facility and the manner in which the Data Center will be decommissioned; the site restoration actions; removal of equipment; the estimated costs in current dollars, and the method for ensuring that the funds will be available for decommissioning and site restoration.
 - i) A description of the facilities, components and equipment, and a sequence and description of the activities required to remove the same in compliance with this section.
 - ii) A report prepared by a qualified third-party (to be approved by the Zoning Administrator in advance) setting forth the procedures and estimated net cost associated with the removal of all equipment and components to a point approved by the serving utilities and the accompanying restoration of the surface to the original elevation with re-vegetation of restored soils areas with crops, native seed mixes, or plant species suitable to the area, consistent with the county's weed control plan.

- iii) Cash, an irrevocable letter of credit, or a performance bond (approved by the Cedar County Attorney in advance) running in favor of Cedar County in an amount no less than one hundred thirty (130) percent of the total estimated net removal/restoration costs as determined by said report. Said security must be in place prior to the issuance of any Data Center Zoning/Building Permit(s) and must remain in effect until the decommissioning is completed.
- iv) The report prepared under paragraph b above shall be updated and provided to Cedar County every five (5) years, and upon any proposed transfer of the Data Center ownership. This would include an updated decommissioning amount as stated in [subsection b section iii](#).
- v) No transfer/assignment of the Data Center permit shall be effective without a corresponding transfer/assignment of the obligations of financial security required under the decommissioning plan as approved by the Zoning Administrator and County Engineer.
- vi) For any part of the Data Center project on leased property, the plan may incorporate agreements with the landowner regarding leaving access roads, fences, gates, or repurposed structures and buildings in place or regarding restoration of agricultural crops or forest resource land. Any use of remaining structures shall be in conformity with the district regulations in effect at that time.
- vii) An infrastructure protection and road use agreement as per Section 6 of this Ordinance.

SECTION 8. TRANSFER.

All Zoning/Building permits, terms of approval for Special Use Permits, associated decommissioning plans granted under this Ordinance are binding upon any future owners, successors or **assigns** of the Data Center(s) and/or BESS.

SECTION 9. REPEALER.

All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict with the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby repealed, only to the extent necessary to resolve the conflict.

SECTION 10. SEVERABILITY.

Should any section or provisions of this Ordinance be declared by the courts to be invalid or unconstitutional, such decision shall not affect the validity of the Ordinance as a whole, or any part thereof other than the part so declared to be invalid or unconstitutional.

SECTION 11. PENALTY.

Any person, persons, firms, partnerships or corporations, whether acting alone or in concert with any other, who violates this Ordinance shall be guilty of a County Infraction and shall be penalized as set forth in Ordinance No. 20 of the County Code of Cedar County, Iowa.

SECTION 12. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Ordinance shall be in effect after its final passage, approval and publication as required by law.

PASSED and APPROVED this_____ day of _____, 2026.

RESOLUTION NO. ____

A RESOLUTION SETTING A PUBLIC HEARING ON AMENDING TITLE 17 – ZONING OF THE DECORAH MUNICIPAL CODE; CHAPTER 17.116 REGARDING DATA CENTERS

WHEREAS, the City of Decorah recognizes that data centers represent an emerging industry that can contribute to economic development, technological advancement, property tax valuation growth, and private investment within the community; and

WHEREAS, data centers require significant electrical infrastructure, utility services, emergency response planning, and operational safeguards that warrant specific development standards to protect the public health, safety, and welfare; and

WHEREAS, the City finds that the establishment of performance standards governing utility consumption, noise, fire protection, water use, emergency preparedness, site design, and decommissioning is necessary to ensure that data centers are compatible with surrounding properties and municipal infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the City desires to encourage investment and innovation while preserving the City's natural resources, maintaining the reliability of municipal utilities, protecting neighboring property owners, and ensuring that future data center development occurs in a safe, orderly, and sustainable manner;

WHEREAS, the Municipal Code of the City of Decorah as well as the statutes of the State of Iowa require that a public hearing be conducted by the City Council and that notice of the time and place of said public hearing be published in a local newspaper; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Decorah wishes to set a public hearing on the proposed changes to City Code regarding last-mile delivery facilities.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Decorah, Iowa, as follows:

1. That a public hearing be set on proposed changes to Decorah City Code as follows:

SECTION 1. PURPOSE.

The purpose of this Ordinance is to establish regulations for the development, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of data centers within the City of Decorah in a manner that promotes economic development while protecting public health, safety, welfare, municipal infrastructure, utility resources, environmental quality, and neighboring properties.

SECTION 2. CHAPTER 17.116.020 – PRINCIPAL PERMITTED USES.

Chapter 17.116.020, Principal Permitted Uses, is hereby amended by adding the following permitted use:

"Data Centers, subject to the standards established in Section 17.116.100."

SECTION 3. NEW SECTION 17.116.100 – DATA CENTER STANDARDS.

The following section is added to Chapter 17.116:

17.116.100 DATA CENTERS.

A. Definitions.

1. Data Center. A building or facility housing networked computer servers, storage systems, communications equipment, and associated infrastructure used to process, store, manage, or disseminate digital information.
2. Large Data Center. A data center with a maximum electrical demand exceeding three (3) megawatts.
3. Micro Data Center. A data center with a maximum electrical demand of three (3) megawatts or less.
4. Cryptocurrency Mining. The commercial process by which cryptocurrency transactions are verified and added to a blockchain and through which cryptocurrency is generated.
5. Cryptocurrency Mining Center. A data center primarily engaged in cryptocurrency mining operations.

B. Applicability.

All new data centers and cryptocurrency mining centers and expansions of existing data centers and cryptocurrency mining centers located within the M-3 General Industrial District shall comply with the requirements of this section.

C. Water Use and Cooling Systems.

1. Data centers shall not utilize groundwater wells or surface water sources for cooling purposes unless specifically approved by the City Council following review by the Water Department and Public Works Director.
2. Air-cooled or closed-loop cooling systems shall be utilized.
3. The applicant shall submit projected water demand calculations and a water conservation plan.
4. No discharge of any measurable contaminants outside of the system.

D. Utility Capacity Analysis.

Prior to issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall provide written verification from the serving utility demonstrating:

1. Anticipated maximum electrical demand;
2. Available utility capacity;
3. Required utility infrastructure improvements; and
4. Identification of any impacts on municipal utility operations.

E. Site Plan Requirements.

A site plan shall be submitted for review and approval and shall include:

1. Fencing and security measures;
2. Landscaping plan;
3. Exterior lighting plan;
4. Utility infrastructure;
5. Stormwater management facilities;
6. Emergency access routes; and
7. Project construction timeline.
8. All other provisions required under Chapter 17.36 – SITE PLANS

F. Setbacks.

1. Buildings housing data center operations shall maintain a minimum setback of five hundred (500) feet from any residential zoning district.
2. Backup generators, substations, and cooling equipment shall maintain a minimum setback of seven hundred-fifty (750) feet from any residential zoning district.
3. Greater setbacks may be required where necessary to mitigate noise, vibration, or visual impacts.

4. Site shall not be within 1,000' of a natural waterway, public waterways, water source, or USGS identified sink holes.
5. Site shall not be within 1,000' of 500-year flood plain.
6. A Contaminated Water Plan for any potential surface or subsurface water contamination must be submitted and approved.

G. Noise Standards.

1. Noise generated by the data center and associated equipment shall not exceed:
 - a. Fifty-five (55) dBA measured at the property line adjacent to a residential zoning district; or
 - b. Sixty (60) dBC measured at the same location.
2. Applicants shall provide manufacturer noise specifications and, upon request by the City, post-construction sound testing demonstrating compliance.

H. Backup Power Systems.

1. A Backup Power Plan shall be submitted describing:
 - a. Number and size of generators;
 - b. Fuel type and storage;
 - c. Testing schedule;
 - d. Emission control measures; and
 - e. Emergency operating procedures.
2. Diesel generators shall comply with all applicable federal and state emission standards.
3. Backup power equipment shall be screened from public view to the extent practicable.

I. Fire Protection and Emergency Preparedness.

1. Facilities shall comply with the latest adopted editions of NFPA 75 and NFPA 76.
2. A Fire Safety Compliance Plan shall be submitted and approved prior to occupancy.
3. The owner shall provide annual coordination meetings with the Decorah Fire Department and emergency management officials. An Emergency Operations Plan shall be maintained on-site and provided to emergency responders.

Any specialized equipment necessary for emergency response not currently owned by Decorah Fire Department must be provided.

- J. Security.
1. Facilities shall be enclosed by security fencing.
 2. Controlled access systems and twenty-four-hour monitoring shall be maintained.
 3. Warning signage identifying emergency contacts and hazards shall be posted.

K. Exterior Lighting.

1. All outdoor lighting shall utilize full cutoff fixtures.
2. Lighting shall be directed downward and shielded from adjoining properties.

L. Landscaping.

1. Landscaping shall be provided around the perimeter of the facility where visible from public streets or adjacent non-industrial properties.
2. Combustible vegetation shall be maintained in accordance with applicable fire codes.

M. Roadway Protection.

Where construction activities are expected to generate extraordinary heavy truck traffic, the City may require:

1. A haul route plan;
2. Pre-construction documentation of roadway conditions; and
3. Repair of damage attributable to construction activities.

N. Decommissioning.

1. A Decommissioning Plan shall be submitted prior to issuance of a building permit.
2. The plan shall identify:
 - a. Anticipated facility life;
 - b. Removal procedures;

- c. Waste disposal methods;
 - d. Site restoration procedures; and
 - e. Estimated decommissioning costs.
3. If a facility ceases operation for a continuous period of twelve (12) months, the City may require decommissioning of the facility.
- O. Cryptocurrency Mining Centers.
- 1. Cryptocurrency mining centers shall comply with all requirements applicable to data centers.
 - 2. Cryptocurrency mining centers shall submit documentation demonstrating compliance with all noise standards under this section.
 - 3. The City may require additional noise attenuation measures where necessary to protect surrounding properties.
2. That the public hearing be held on Monday, September 21, 2026 at 5:45 PM at the Council Chambers in City Hall in Decorah, Iowa, and the City Clerk/Finance Officer is hereby authorized to publish notice of a public hearing on the proposed amendment.
3. At said public hearing, public comment may be taken by the City Council on the proposed zoning amendment.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this ____ day of _____, 2026.

CITY OF DECORAH, IOWA

Frederic A. Carlson, Mayor

ATTEST:

Keri Sand, City Clerk-Finance Officer

Moved By:
Seconded By:
Roll Call Vote
Ayes:
Nays:

ORDINANCE NO. 836

AN ORDINANCE WITHIN CHAPTER 165 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF WEST BRANCH ADDING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARKS.

WHEREAS, an addition to the following sections and subsections of Chapter 165 Zoning Regulations; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED:

1. Amendment. Section 165.24.1, 165.25.1, 165.26.1 and 165.35.1, the Permitted Uses area, is hereby amended by adding information for public and private parks, as follows:

165.24 R-1 DISTRICT REQUIREMENTS.

1. Permitted Uses.

- A. All uses allowed by right in Agricultural A-1 District except that there shall be no raising or pasturing of livestock, poultry or other commercial domestic animals or birds.
- B. Boarding house, provided that not more than four such boarders shall be permitted without special exception by the Board of Adjustment and by the Health Officer of the City.
- C. Public utility substations or pumping stations meeting the requirements of Section [165.23\(2\)\(A\)](#).
- D. Private schools of general instruction.
- E. Accessory uses customarily incidental to any of the foregoing permitted uses.
- F. Funeral homes.
- G. **Public and Private Parks.**

165.25 R-2 DISTRICT REQUIREMENTS.

1. Permitted Uses.

- A. All uses allowed by right in the Residence R-1 District.
- B. Two-family dwellings.
- C. Boarding house.
- D. Zero lot line units.
- E. **Public and Private Parks.**

165.26 R-3 DISTRICT REQUIREMENTS.

1. Permitted Uses. In Residence R-3 District, the provisions of this section shall apply and the following uses permitted:

- A. All uses allowed by right in the Residence R-2 District.
- B. Multiple-family dwellings up to 12 units.
- C. Child care centers.

- D. Zero lot line units.
- E. **Public and Private Parks.**

165.35 PUBLIC USE DISTRICT.

It is the intent of the Public Use District (P) to provide reference on the zoning map to public uses of land. Thus, land owned by the United States Federal Government, the State of Iowa, Johnson or Cedar County, the West Branch Community School District, the City of West Branch or other governmental entities will be designated Public Use.

1. Permitted Principal Uses and Structures.
 - A. Use of land, buildings, or structures of the aforementioned federal and State governments or political subdivisions thereof.
 - B. Agriculture.
 - C. **Public Parks.**
2. Conflicts. All ordinances or parts of ordinances not specifically provided for and in conflict with the provisions of this ordinance are hereby repealed.
3. Adjudication. If any section, provision or part of this ordinance shall be adjudged to be invalid or unconstitutional, such adjudication shall not affect the validity of the ordinance as a whole or any section, provision or part thereof not adjudged invalid or unconstitutional.
4. Effective Date. This ordinance shall be in full force and effect after its passage, approval and publication as required by law.

Approved and adopted this 4th of January, 2027.

First reading: December 7, 2026
Second reading: December 21, 2026
Third Reading: January 4, 2027

Roger Laughlin, Mayor

ATTEST:

Alycia Friis, City Clerk