

10 Questions to Ask About Any Data Center Project

A neutral checklist for neighbors, councils, chambers and reporters. Use it whether you support a project, oppose it, or have not decided. Ask every project the same ten.

☐ **1. Where will the water come from, and what is the backup?**

WHY City system, wells and a lake or river are different supplies with different limits.

LOOK Site application; city water utility; groundwater conservation district; council agenda packet.

☐ **2. How many gallons per day: on average and on the peak day?**

WHY A water system has to be built for the peak, not the average.

LOOK Ask for both numbers in writing, plus day-one use and full buildout.

☐ **3. What cooling method, and is the water loop closed or open?**

WHY Cooling design drives water and power use. Ask where the heat goes.

LOOK Application and engineering summary; U.S. Dept. of Energy data center design guide ([energy.gov](https://www.energy.gov)).

☐ **4. Has the owner filed the TWDB Water Use Survey?**

WHY Texas Water Code §16.012(m) requires recipients to return it. Only operating facilities are surveyed.

LOOK twdb.texas.gov/waterplanning/waterusesurvey; ask the owner; Texas Public Information Act request to TWDB.

☐ **5. How many megawatts, and what is the grid connection status?**

WHY Announced, applied, and approved to connect are three different stages.

LOOK Serving utility; ERCOT large-load connection process (ercot.com).

☐ **6. Who pays for grid upgrades? Could other customers' rates change?**

WHY Lines and substations cost money, and someone pays for them.

LOOK The utility's agreement with the project; Public Utility Commission (puc.texas.gov).

☐ **7. Where is the site, and what do zoning and land rules say?**

WHY Inside or outside city limits changes who decides. Zoning changes need a public hearing.

LOOK City council and planning agendas; county appraisal district parcel records; the zoning notice.

☐ **8. How loud, how bright, and which air permits apply?**

WHY Cities can set noise and light limits. Air permits are the state's job (TCEQ).

LOOK City code of ordinances and any sound study; permit-search.tceq.texas.gov.

☐ **9. What jobs and public money are involved, and where is the record?**

WHY Jobs, new tax revenue and tax abatements (up to 10 years) are weighed together.

LOOK Signed agreement and agenda; Texas Comptroller Chapter 312 abatement registry; jobs numbers in writing.

☐ **10. What is public, what is confidential, and what if plans change?**

WHY Projects change owner, size, power and cooling. Ask what triggers a new vote or filing.

LOOK Texas Public Information Act (Gov't Code ch. 552): a written request, answered "promptly."

Not known yet and **confidential** are valid answers. Write down the answer, the date and who said it. Not legal advice. Sources: Texas statutes, TWDB, TCEQ, ERCOT, Texas Comptroller, City of Lubbock public meeting of Jul.

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