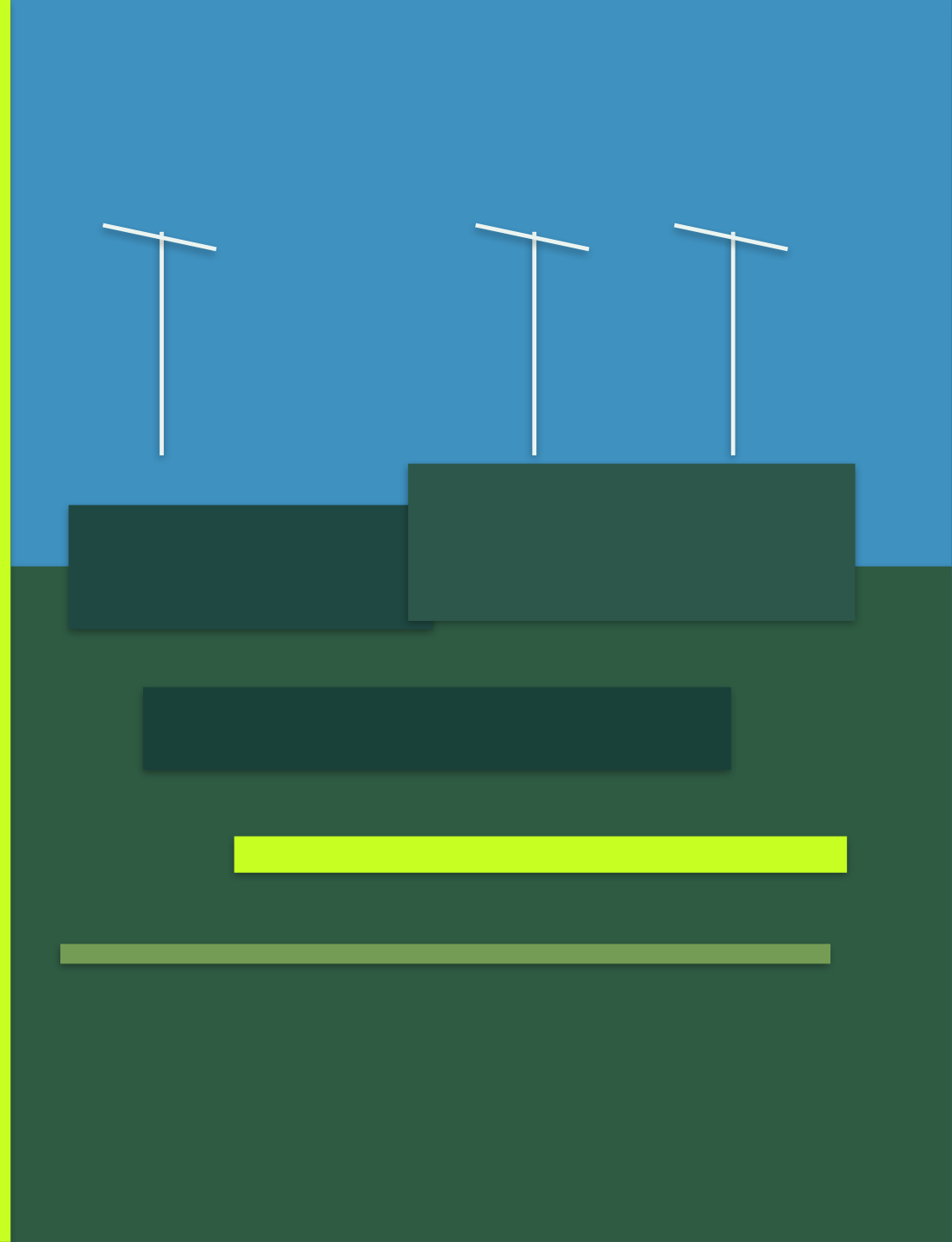
GOOD NEIGHBOR DATA

Data center impact: evaluate the whole community.

A concise municipal briefing for project review.

Community Impact Guide • July 2026



The responsible question is not “good or bad?”

It is whether the project fits the place—and whether costs, benefits, and commitments can be verified.

9.5–15.3% Estimated U.S. electricity share from data centers by 2030

>10,000× Variation found in workload-level water use across operating factors

Sources: Berkeley Lab, U.S. Data Center Energy Usage Report; Water Use of Data Center Workloads.

Review one connected local system.

The maximum planned buildout—not just the first phase—sets the decision frame.

01 **Electricity + grid**

02 **Water + wastewater**

03 **Air + climate**

04 **Noise + lighting**

05 **Land + stormwater**

06 **Traffic + services**

07 **Jobs + fiscal value**

08 **Long-term accountability**

Evaluate benefits and pressures with the same discipline.

POTENTIAL LOCAL BENEFITS

Investment + revenue — Test incentives, valuation, depreciation, and public costs.

Construction + operations work — Separate temporary trades from permanent roles.

Funded infrastructure — Define delivery, maintenance, access, and ownership.

Essential digital services — Recognize the public and economic value supported.

POTENTIAL LOCAL PRESSURES

Concentrated resource demand — Test capacity, upgrades, safeguards, and cost allocation.

Persistent operating effects — Model generators, cooling, lighting, traffic, and security.

Land + infrastructure commitment — Include substations, corridors, roads, and stormwater.

Fiscal + service exposure — Independently test emergency, road, utility, and incentive costs.

Turn every concern into an evidence request.

A credible record connects the question, the evidence, and the measurable response.

MAXIMUM PROJECT	Full-buildout site, utility, phasing, and alternatives plans
POWER + WATER	Hourly load forecast, utility studies, water balance, drought plan
OPERATING EFFECTS	Air permit calculations, acoustic study, lighting and emergency scenarios
LAND + SERVICES	Existing conditions, habitat/stormwater, traffic, responder review
NET PUBLIC VALUE	Independent fiscal analysis, incentives, workforce plan
DURABLE OBLIGATIONS	Commitment register, monitoring, transfer, reuse, and closure plans

Accountability over slogans.

Every commitment should specify:

WHO

Responsible party

HOW

Legal or administrative instrument

WHEN

Deadline + reporting cadence

MEASURE

Method, boundary + baseline

CORRECT

Variance response + remedy

ENDURE

Ownership transfer, reuse + closure

Before approval, require a review record that can survive opening day.

1. Define the maximum buildout and supporting infrastructure.
2. Establish credible local baselines and operating scenarios.
3. Compare alternatives before major choices become fixed.
4. Assign costs, responsibilities, and enforcement clearly.
5. Commission, measure, publicly report, correct, and improve.

Use qualified legal and technical review appropriate to local authority.

Start with the decision in front of you.

Bring the project context. We'll help structure the questions, evidence, and measurable commitments.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Measure.
Report.
Correct.

PRIMARY SOURCES

Berkeley Lab • International Energy Agency • National Association of Counties • Pennsylvania DCED • University of Michigan • World Resources Institute • Virginia JLARC

Full guide and source links:

goodneighbordata.com/responsible-data-centers/community-impact