

DATA CENTER POLICY FRAMEWORK: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

CITY COUNCIL DIRECTION

On February 17, 2026, El Paso City Council authorized the City Manager to develop a proposed Data Center Policy Framework for the City of El Paso.

As directed by Council, the framework shall:

- Prioritize community engagement, utility providers, and local, state, and regional government in implementation considerations
- Evaluate long-term impacts on infrastructure and utilities

Council also directed the City Attorney to conduct a legal analysis of 380 agreements with data centers to identify best practices, lessons learned, and opportunities to develop a new framework.

This work is also part of the City's Climate Action Plan, which identifies the need to evaluate data center policy through environmental, community, and economic development considerations.

The Council direction is focused on developing a policy framework to guide future decisions.

It does not direct staff to reconsider, reopen, cancel, or void any existing agreement.

WHAT WE'VE HEARD SO FAR

Residents have raised significant concerns, particularly related to the META project in Northeast El Paso. Key themes include:

- **Opposition to Data Center Development:** Requests to cancel existing agreements and avoid future data center projects
- **Environmental Concerns:** Water use, air quality, noise, energy demand, and impacts to wildlife and surrounding neighborhoods
- **Transparency:** A desire for earlier, clearer communication before large-scale projects move forward
- **Community Benefit and Cost:** Questions about whether data centers could increase utility costs or provide enough benefit to the community in return

PROCESS

The City is using a community-informed process to develop the proposed framework. The City cannot build a meaningful framework without community input.

- **Community Meetings:** Open-house meetings are being held across the City to gather direct public input. This format allows residents to attend during the meeting window, speak directly with staff, ask questions, and share feedback in a more accessible, less formal setting focused on listening, not formal action.
- **Community Survey:** The City is also developing a survey to give residents another way to share input, especially those who may not be able to attend an in-person meeting.
- **Stakeholder Coordination:** The City is meeting with utility providers and local and regional partners as part of implementation considerations.
- **Public Information Hub:** A dedicated FAQs can be found on the City's website to provide updates, facts, and information related to data center development: ElPasoTexas.gov/Data-Centers/
- **Draft Framework and Continued Engagement:** Community input gathered now will help shape the first draft of the framework. [Once a draft framework is developed, the City anticipates additional community meetings and opportunities for public review before final recommendations are presented to City Council.](#)
- **Final Recommendations:** Community input, technical analysis, and legal review will be compiled into recommendations for City Council consideration.

WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU TODAY

We are here to listen. Community input is essential to shaping a policy framework that reflects El Paso's priorities.

We want to hear from you about:

- The protections you believe are most important for infrastructure, utilities, and the environment
- The standards and opportunities that should be considered in any future framework
- The lessons the City should take from existing agreements as it develops a new approach

Your feedback will help inform the recommendations presented to City Council.