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**NEWS
RELEASE**

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City Adopts Data Center Policy Framework to Strengthen Oversight of Future Hyperscale Data Centers

Framework Strengthens Environmental, Infrastructure, and Community Protections

EL PASO, Texas—The El Paso City Council has approved the City's first-ever Data Center Policy Framework, establishing a comprehensive approach for evaluating future hyperscale data center projects while strengthening protections for residents, infrastructure, natural resources, and utility ratepayers.

The framework is the result of nearly six months of research, public engagement, coordination with regional partners, and policy analysis directed by City Council in February 2026. Throughout that process, the City hosted six community meetings, gathered more than 2,300 public comments, received 274 online survey responses, and incorporated 162 comments submitted during public review of the draft framework.

Throughout the engagement process, residents consistently raised concerns about water use, electricity demand, environmental impacts, transparency, infrastructure, incentives, and long-term accountability. Those priorities directly shaped the framework's recommendations, resulting in stronger zoning oversight, enhanced environmental standards, expanded transparency, greater public participation, and increased accountability for future hyperscale data center projects.

With today's action, the City establishes a long-term policy roadmap for evaluating future hyperscale data center projects. Going forward, future proposals will be evaluated under consistent expectations that emphasize environmental stewardship, transparency, accountability, and meaningful public participation. The framework also establishes a roadmap for future ordinance amendments, legislative advocacy, and implementation strategies that will return to City Council for consideration.

The framework establishes policy recommendations focused on:

- Requiring future hyperscale data center applications to obtain a Special Permit, ensuring public notice, City Plan Commission review, and a public hearing and final action by City Council.
- Establishing enhanced environmental standards addressing water use, energy demand, wastewater, noise, lighting, and ecological impacts.
- Eliminating local economic incentives for future hyperscale data center projects, consistent with previous City Council policy direction.
- Encouraging Community Benefit Agreements that provide measurable investments in local priorities.
- Expanding state and federal advocacy to strengthen utility ratepayer protections, improve transparency, and address the impacts of large-load facilities.

The framework also recommends policies intended to improve long-term accountability, including enhanced disclosure requirements, parent-company commitments where legally appropriate, stronger

—more—



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utility cost protections, and measures designed to help ensure future infrastructure costs are borne by project developers rather than existing residential and business customers.

“This framework reflects months of listening, public engagement, and careful policy development,” said City Manager Dionne Mack. “It establishes clear expectations for future hyperscale data center projects while strengthening environmental protections, accountability, and public participation. Just as importantly, it gives the City a roadmap to continue adapting its policies as technology, regulations, and community priorities evolve, ensuring future decisions protect El Paso’s residents, infrastructure, natural resources, and ratepayers.”

The framework also advances priorities identified in the City’s Climate Action Plan by incorporating environmental stewardship, infrastructure planning, economic accountability, and community engagement into future policy decisions. It is intended to serve as a living policy document that can continue evolving through future City Council actions as technology, utility requirements, laws, regulations, and community priorities change.

Implementation of the framework will occur through future ordinance amendments, policy updates, and other actions that will return to City Council for consideration through the City’s public decision-making process.

The complete Data Center Policy Framework is available at www.ElPasoTexas.gov/data-centers.

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