

Response to Town Hall Comment: Potential Downfalls of the Data Center Project

Thank you to Franco Gianfagna for submitting the question: "What are the downfalls of this project?"

This is a valid and thoughtful question. Every large-scale project, especially one new to a small community like Perry Village, presents both opportunities and challenges. Below is a detailed overview of potential concerns and how they are being addressed through modern regulation, planning, and best practices.

1. Lessons from Early Data Centers

Earlier generations of data centers, particularly those developed in the 1990s and early 2000s, occasionally created local issues such as elevated noise levels, inefficient energy use, and limited communication with host communities. In response, significant regulatory improvements have been implemented nationwide and at the local level. Modern zoning codes, design standards, and noise regulations are now enforced to reduce visual impact, light pollution, and operational noise. Cities like New Albany and Hilliard, Ohio have established clear requirements for landscaping, noise thresholds, and energy efficiency, which Perry Village is also working to incorporate.

Sources:

- Data Center Frontier, 2023: 'Evolution of Data Center Design'
- City of Hilliard Economic Development, 2022
- New Albany Planning Commission Guidelines, 2023

2. Challenges of First-Time Projects

Introducing a data center to Perry Village represents a new type of economic development. With that comes some uncertainty, including:

- Community concern due to limited precedent
- The need to evaluate infrastructure capacity (confirm with providers residents will not be affected- supply, cost, timeframes)
- Zoning clarity to avoid legal challenges from developers
- Strong communication to ensure residents are informed throughout the process

To mitigate these challenges, the Village is moving cautiously. The property has not yet been sold. Instead, a land purchase agreement was approved that allows the developer time to conduct testing and due diligence. No site plans have been submitted or approved. The Village retains full zoning control and will require review by the Planning Commission and Village Council before any construction begins.

3. Utility and Environmental Protections

Modern data centers use closed-loop cooling systems, which significantly reduce water consumption by recirculating the same water. Only small amounts of make-up water are needed, and no discharge is released untreated. Any wastewater produced would be sent through Lake County's centralized water treatment facilities, which ensures it meets all state and federal environmental standards before being returned to the environment.

The data center would operate within the FirstEnergy transmission system, with oversight from several regulatory bodies: the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO), the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC), and PJM Interconnection, which oversees regional energy flow and reliability.

These agencies ensure that the grid is not overloaded and that backup systems are in place to avoid service interruptions.

These protections are in place because past projects elsewhere revealed vulnerabilities. Over the past 25 years, state and federal agencies have developed a robust framework of standards to ensure that today's data centers are cleaner, quieter, and more reliable.

Sources:

- Ohio EPA: Industrial Wastewater Standards
- PUCO: Utility Oversight
- NERC: Electric Reliability Regulations
- PJM Interconnection: Regional Transmission Coordination

4. Visual, Noise, and Site Impact

Residents in other communities have expressed concerns about visual and auditory impacts of data centers. Perry Village is committed to addressing these concerns by requiring:

- Architectural review for building appearance and color
- Berms and landscape buffering
- Directional lighting to reduce night glow
- Sound level compliance with industry standards

All of these standards would be written into any zoning approval and enforced throughout the life of the project.

In conclusion, while all development carries some risk, Perry Village is using a transparent, phased approach informed by lessons from other communities.

Through proactive planning, oversight, and public engagement, the goal is to maximize community benefit while protecting the character and wellbeing of the Village.