

**City of Farmington  
City Council Work Session Minutes  
Monday, June 3, 2024**

The City Council met in a Work Session on Monday, June 3, 2024, at Farmington City Hall, 430 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Farmington, Minnesota.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Hoyt called the Work Session to order at 5 pm.

Members Present: Mayor Joshua Hoyt  
Councilmembers Holly Bernatz, Nick Lien, and Steve Wilson

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Lynn Gorski, City Administrator  
Julie Flaten, Asst City Administrator/HR Director  
Deanna Kuennen, Community & Economic Development Director  
Tony Wippler, Planning Manager  
Kellee Omlid, Parks & Recreation Director  
Gary Rutherford, Police Chief  
John Powell, Public Works Director  
Dani Olson, GIS Specialist  
Shirley Buecksler, City Clerk

Also Present: Katie Bernhjelm  
Alison Harwood, Director of Natural Resources, WSB  
Thom Jackson, MN AFCOM Chapter President

**2. APPROVE AGENDA**

Motion was made by Councilmember Wilson and seconded by Councilmember Bernatz to approve the agenda, as presented.

Motion carried: 4 ayes / 0 nays

**3. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

3.1 Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR) and Data Center Overview – Information Session

Director Kuennen presented, along with Alison Harwood, Director of Natural Resources at WSB and Thom Jackson, MN AFCOM Chapter President.

The City of Farmington hired WSB to assist with the review and distribution, as well as the review of agency comments and preparation of the AUAR orders and adoption documents associated with two large areas. The City is the Responsible Government Unit (RGU) for the environmental review and the AUAR process, as

defined in Minnesota Rule 4410 specifically identifies when a review is required, who manages the process, what topics are covered in the review, and what happens following adoption of AUAR. Ms. Harwood provided information about the process, as well as information on what an AUAR is and what an AUAR isn't.

Mr. Jackson presented a data center overview. With the recent uptick in interest in data center development in Minnesota, it is important to understand why data centers exist, what data centers "look" like (including how they have evolved), and what the current concerns and benefits are as it pertains to this type of development.

City Council asked questions and received answers. Discussion only, no direction.

**4. COUNCIL COMMITTEE UPDATE**

No update.

**5. CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE**


The next scheduled work session is June 4<sup>th</sup> at 4 pm in the Council Chambers. This is a joint work session with the Planning Commission.

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion was made by Councilmember Lien and seconded by Councilmember Wilson to adjourn the meeting at 6:36 p.m.

Motion carried: 4 ayes / 0 nays

Respectfully submitted,

  
Shirley R. Bueckler  
City Clerk

# Alternative Urban Areawide Reviews



# Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR) Process

## Relevant Terms and Definitions

- EQB: Environmental Quality Board
- AUAR: Alternative Urban Areawide Review
- EAW: Environmental Assessment Worksheet
- EIS: Environmental Impact Statement
- RGU: Responsible Government Unit (City of Farmington)
- Significant: cannot be undone and/or addressed through a formal review or permitting process.

# Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR) Process

## What is an AUAR

- State environmental review document
- Hybrid of an EAW and EIS
- Studies the effects different development scenarios may have on the environment and community infrastructure
- Updated every 5 years

## Purpose

- Used as a planning tool
- Identify the potential for cumulative impacts of anticipated development within an area
- Identify mitigation measures for potential impacts
- Informs future permitting, planning, and zoning decisions
- Does not approve or deny a project

# Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR) Process

## When is a review required?

- State statute (MN Rule 4410) requires environmental review for various types of development types and densities.
  - e.g., residential development exceeding 250 unattached units or 375 attached units; light industrial exceeding 300,000 square feet; industrial, commercial, or institutional exceeding 200,000 square feet
- AUARs are an allowable type of environmental review for certain development types.
- Eligible development types include:
  - Residential, commercial, warehousing, and light industrial
- Who manages the AUAR?
  - City is RGU and is the owner of the document.
  - Future mitigation measures identified may be responsibility of developer or city – determined at time of plan review

# Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR) Process

## Topics covered in an AUAR

- Land Use and Cover Types
- Required Permits/Approvals
- Geology and Grading
- Water Resources
- Wildlife and Habitat
- Contamination
- Greenhouse Gas/Climate Impacts
- Water and Sewer Infrastructure
- Transportation
- Historic Properties
- Visual
- Air and Noise
- Cumulative Potential Effects
- Mitigation Plan

# Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR) Process

AUAR Action
RGU Adopts Order to Prepare AUAR
RGU develops AUAR (note: document preparation is typically started prior to Order)
RGU reviews and distributes Draft AUAR and Mitigation Plan for public and agency review
Draft AUAR and Mitigation Plan available for 30-day public and agency review
RGU revises Draft AUAR and Mitigation Plan based on comments from public and agencies
RGU distributes Final AUAR and Mitigation to agencies and Met Council for final 10-day review and objection
If no objections, RGU Adopts Final AUAR and Mitigation Plan
RGU updates AUAR every 5 years until development build-out is complete

# Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR) Process

What happens following adoption?

- AUAR remains valid for the studied development scenarios for 5 years.
  - All development that occurs within the limits of the studied development scenarios is covered and does not require additional environmental review.
  - Developers will review and implement mitigation measures outlined in the AUAR as development progresses.
- 
- When to update the AUAR
    - The AUAR must be updated every 5 years.
    - The AUAR must be updated if a proposed development scenario is more dense/impactful than what was studied under the AUAR.

# Questions

Alison Harwood  
[aharwood@wsbeng.com](mailto:aharwood@wsbeng.com)

# Data Center Overview

Presented to: City of Farmington, MN  
June 3, 2024



**GREATER MINNESOTA  
CHAPTER**

Advancing Data Center and  
IT Infrastructure Professionals

# Data Center Overview

## Thom Jackson, PE

*Data Center Design Engineer  
MN AFCOM Chapter President*

- Registered Professional Engineer in MN
- LEED Accredited Professional
- Dept. of Energy Data Center Energy Practitioner
- Data Center Mentor



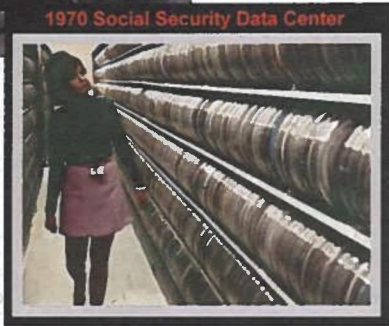
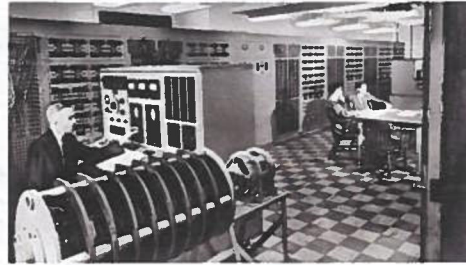
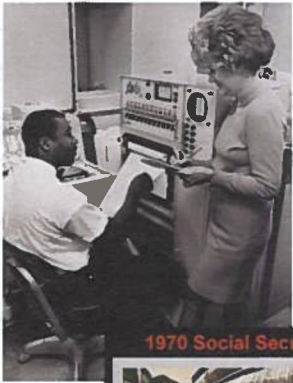
**GREATER MINNESOTA  
CHAPTER**

Advancing Data Center and  
IT Infrastructure Professionals



# Data Center Overview

## Just a room full of computers



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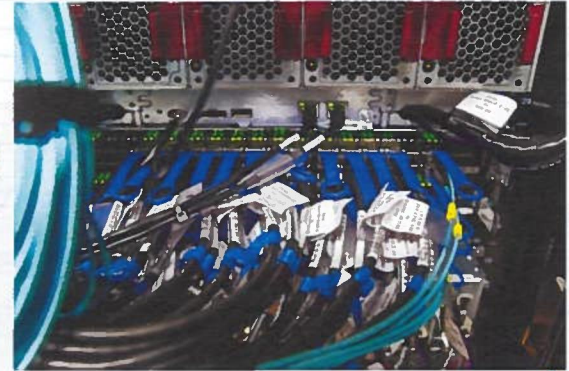
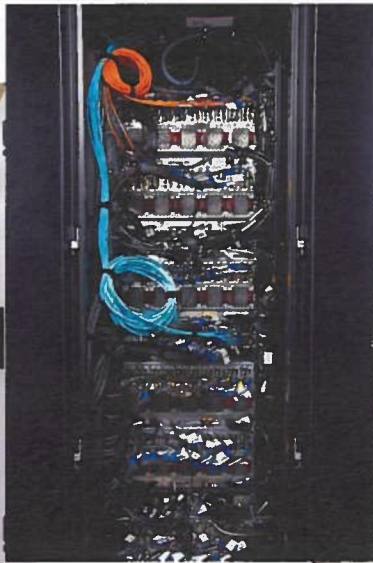
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# Data Center Overview

## Just a room full of computers



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# Data Center Overview

## What uses a data center?

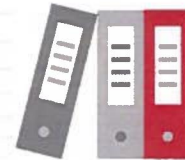
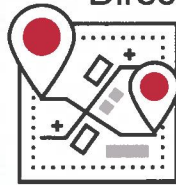


Email

Phone Call



Directions



Documentation

Retail Transactions



Health  
Records



Internet



Streaming TV



Banking



Social  
Media  
Apps



Music  
Streaming



# Data Center Overview

## Data Center Sizes / Types

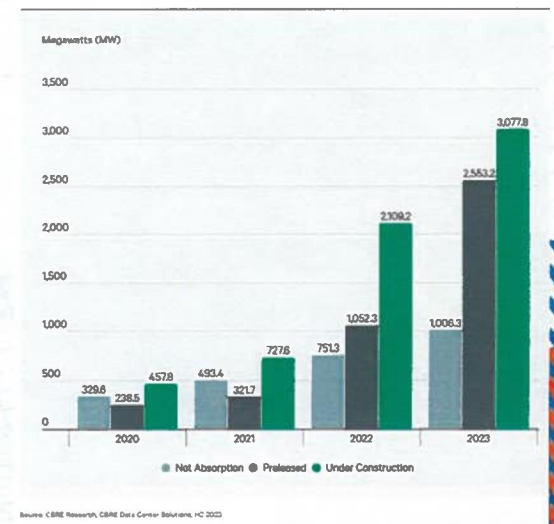
### Types

- Enterprise
- Colocation
- Edge
- Hyperscale

### Growth Rate

- 2000 - 1 MW
- 2010 - 10 MW
- 2024 - 100 MW+

Figure 5: Primary Markets Historic Net Absorption, Preleasing & Under Construction



# Data Center Overview

## Where is the Cloud?



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## Data Center Overview

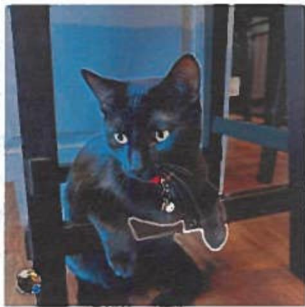
### Are data centers important?

- **Outages**
  - 911 calls, Retail, Internet connectivity for business
- **Security**
  - Health Records, Financial, School Records, Photos
- **Speed and Accuracy**
  - Bank transactions, Stock Market, Favorite Show!



# Data Center Overview

## Artificial Intelligence – Data Center Impact



Add a Caption

Look Up Bombay

Friday • Mar 15, 2024 • 8:06 AM

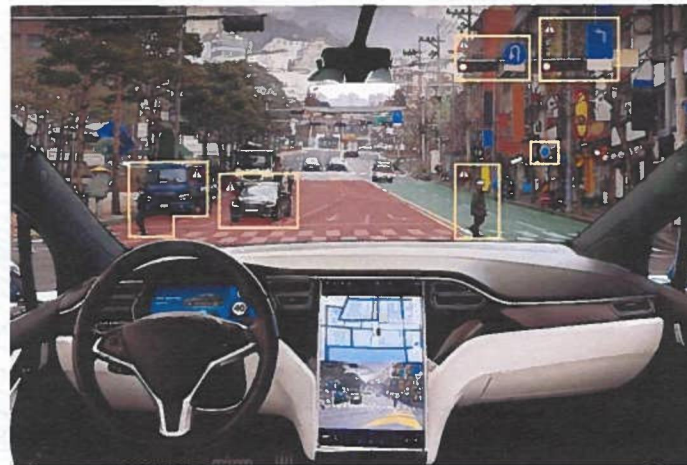
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Apple iPhone 14 Pro

Main Camera — 24 mm / 1.78

12 MP • 3024 x 4032 • 2.5 MiB

ISO 800 24 mm 0 ev / 1.78 1/60 s



AI tool  
ChestLink version 2.6, Oxipit

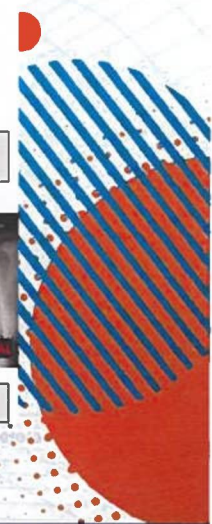
Posteroanterior  
view?

Anteroposterior  
view?



AUTOGENERATED  
REPORT

RADIOLOGIST  
WORKLIST

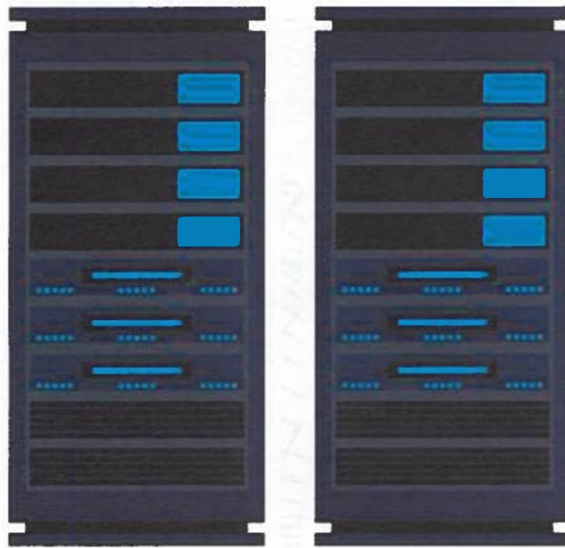


# Data Center Overview

## What supports a Data Center?



Building



Power



Cooling



Internet /  
Cabling



IT



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# Recent Concerns – Energy Usage

- Always Increasing Energy Efficiencies
- Renewable Energy Deployments
- Green Grid – founded in 2007
  - Defined Power Usage Effectiveness (PUE)
  - Defined Water Usage Effectiveness (WUE)



# Recent Concerns – Water Usage



- Depends on available water utility
- Depends on chosen cooling technology
  - Evaporative Cooling Tower – up to 15 gpm / MW
  - Closed Air-Cooled Chiller – minimal



# Recent Concerns – Noise



- **IT Equipment Noise**
  - Far within concrete building
- **Generators – Emergency use only**
  - Sound Attenuation
- **Cooling Equipment**
  - Sound Dampening Fans



## Data Center Overview

### Recent Concerns – Pollution



- Emergency Generators
  - Used just like Hospitals – only during utility outage
  - Testing one hour per month
  - Meets EPA requirements



## Data Center Overview

### Recent Concerns – Traffic



- Construction Traffic
- Once Built, box truck deliveries of:
  - IT equipment
  - Maintenance materials
- Employees 24/7



## Data Center Overview



### Recent Concerns – Jobs for Local Area

- Hundreds of trades jobs during ~24-month construction
- Highly skilled IT workforce
- Trades jobs to maintain MEP equipment



## Data Center Overview

### Why Minnesota?

- Considered a Tier 2 Market
- Free Cooling Potential > 80% of the year
- MN tax incentive program
- Available Power & Land



# Data Center Overview

## Take aways

- Data Centers are behind every business
- Technology Growing
  - AI will require more
- Good Neighbor
- Great Jobs
- Concerns Manageable



# Data Center Overview



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