
Lavon Industrial Improvement Report

A comparative land use assessment of the 79.312 acres in the Elevon Planned Development

Prepared by Joshua Goldstrom · Lavon, Texas · August 2026

A comparative land use assessment of the 79.312 acres designated Land Use Parcels 8 and 9 of the Elevon Planned Development, Lavon, Collin County, Texas.

Joshua Goldstrom

August 2026 · Version 2 · Prepared independently, not by the City of Lavon

What changed in Version 2. The nine-year Business Park standards freeze runs from October 2022, not from the December 2024 amendment, so it ends at roughly October 2031; it pertains to Parcel 9 under Section 1.3.58, and Section 1.3.53 carries a parallel clause for Parcel 8. The city has indicated that in most relevant areas, changes were approved in the code, and that it is working on noise and other protections. Corrections to Version 1 came from City of Lavon staff review, August 2026. The full running list of corrections, including several that affect the web edition only, is kept at lavonbanana.com/79-acres.

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1

Introduction

Purpose, scope and terms

There are 79 acres on the edge of town that Lavon has already zoned. Most of the argument about them has been about one possible use. This report looks at all of them, using the same measuring stick for each, so that whatever you end up believing, you believe it for reasons you can check.

43

uses allowed here

53 more next door

31

need no public hearing

a data center is one

0

applications filed

as of August 2026

23¢

of a tax dollar stays
local

schools get the most

Why this exists

In December 2024 the City of Lavon approved zoning for 79.3 acres in the Elevon development, off FM 2755. ^[1] That zoning lists the kinds of business allowed to be built there: 43 on one parcel, 53 on the other.

One of them is a data center, and that is the one everybody has been arguing about. But it is one entry on a long list, and almost nobody, on either side of the argument, has read the rest of the list. That seemed worth fixing.

Scope and limitations

► What this is

Every kind of business allowed on that land, grouped into eleven families and measured against the same seven yardsticks: traffic, noise, water, jobs, tax value, electricity and hours of operation. Where the honest answer is a wide range, the report gives a wide range. Where the honest answer is that nobody knows yet, it says that instead of supplying a made-up number.

► What this is not

This is not a case for the data center, and it is not a case against it.

The author is a resident, not an engineer, a lawyer or a city official. Everything here comes from public documents, and every figure carries a source so the work can be checked rather than trusted.

Nothing in this report is legal advice. Section 8 in particular is written as questions for the City Attorney rather than as conclusions.

The City's position, in full

► City of Lavon public statement, June 25, 2026

"We are aware that there are many questions regarding data center development. The City of Lavon has received no site plan or building applications for a data center project. There are currently no data center projects in the works in the City of Lavon. There is property whose zoning permits a data center, and we are researching best practices for regulating the development of such a project if an application is submitted.

Our priority is, and always will be, serving the people of Lavon. We are committed to listening, being transparent, and making thoughtful decisions that reflect the long-term interests of our community." ^[30]

Three things to know before reading further

- **No application has been filed.** The City has confirmed that no application of any kind exists for a data center on this land: no site plan, no plat, no building permit. ^[2] That fact carries more legal weight than it appears to, and Section 8 explains why.
- **The zoning is already in place.** It was approved in December 2024. This report is not about whether to approve something. It concerns land that is already approved.
- **The City is only part of the story.** Water is run by a separate utility district, and electricity by the state grid and its regulators. Lavon controls neither. Section 8 is explicit about where the City has authority and where it does not.

Terms used throughout

Terms used in this report

By right. A use the zoning already allows. If plans meet the rules, the City issues permits. No public hearing and no council vote.

Conditional use. A use that needs a separate permit on top of the zoning, requiring a hearing at Planning and Zoning and another at City Council.

Planned Development (PD). Custom zoning written for one specific property, replacing the city's standard districts.

Hyperscale data center. A very large facility housing computing equipment for a single major operator. The ordinance defines it, and expressly excludes cryptocurrency mining.

Closed-loop cooling. Cooling that recirculates the same water in a sealed system. Uses almost no water once filled. The alternative, evaporative cooling, boils water away and can use millions of gallons a day.

dBA. The standard measure of loudness as a person hears it. Every 10 dBA roughly doubles perceived loudness. A refrigerator is about 40; conversation about 60.

Vested rights. Texas law freezing certain development rules once an application is filed, so the rules cannot change mid-project.

TIRZ. Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone. A defined area where part of the growth in property tax is set aside to repay public infrastructure costs rather than going to general services.

2

The Site

Location, zoning and permitted uses

IN THIS SECTION

- 79.312 acres, zoned since December 2024, with **no application of any kind on file**.
- **31 of the 43 permitted uses need no public hearing**. A data center is one of them.
- Nothing heavy is permitted. No rendering plant, smelter, refinery or landfill, and every industrial use must operate **entirely indoors**.

Site data

Item	Detail
Location	South and east of FM 2755, Elevon development, City of Lavon, Collin County
Total area	79.312 acres
Designation	Land Use Parcels 8 and 9, Elevon Planned Development
Governing ordinance	Ord. No. 2024-12-01, adopted December 3, 2024, amending Ord. 2022-10-03
Underlying standards	Business Park District (B); Parcel 8 may also use Retail District (R)
Permitted uses	43 on Parcel 9 (31 by right, 12 conditional); 53 on Parcel 8 (41 by right, 12 conditional)
Maximum height	45 ft general; 65 ft hotel; 85 ft data center
Maximum lot coverage	75 percent
Minimum setbacks	25 ft front, side and rear; 100 ft for a data center
Landscape buffer	15 ft minimum adjacent to FM 2755 and McClendon Road
Maximum building size	30,000 sq ft on Parcel 8, except that the limit does not apply to a data center
Standards freeze	Business Park standards fixed for 9 years from October 2022, to approximately October 2031 (Sec. 1.3.58, Parcel 9); Sec. 1.3.53 carries a parallel nine-year clause for Parcel 8
Applications on file	None, as of August 2026

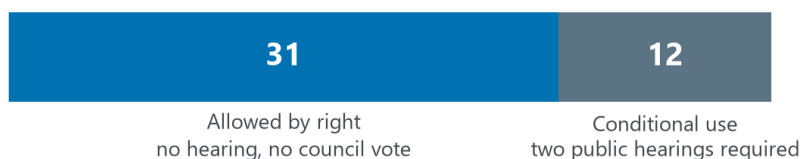
All figures above are taken from the adopted ordinance. ^[1] The two parcels carry different rule sets: Parcel 8 leans retail and community, while Parcel 9 is the business park side and holds the industrial possibilities. Most of this report concerns Parcel 9.

How a use gets approved

There are two routes, and the difference matters more than the list itself. The terms are defined in Section 1; what follows is how they divide this particular list.

How the 43 Uses Get Approved

The 43 uses allowed on Parcel 9, by how each one gets approved.



A data center is in the by-right group. Warehousing, machining, truck repair and flammable liquids storage are all in the conditional group.

Figure 1. Approval route for the 43 uses on Parcel 9.

⚠ The data center is in the by-right group

A data center requires no hearing and no council vote. So does light manufacturing.

Warehousing and distribution, machining and welding, truck repair, and storage of flammable liquids are all **conditional** — each must return for two public hearings before it can be built.

The use drawing the most concern is the one with the least public process remaining, and several uses that sound heavier carry more.

Uses not permitted

Rumors run in both directions, so this warrants equal clarity. Neither parcel permits a rendering plant, slaughterhouse, smelter, chemical plant, refinery, landfill, or heavy industry of any kind. The heaviest permitted uses are machining and welding, and the storage of flammable liquids, both of which are conditional. The ordinance also expressly excludes cryptocurrency mining from its definition of a data center. ^[1]

► One footnote that does considerable quiet work

Every manufacturing and machining use on this list carries the same footnote in the city's zoning tables: **conducted entirely within the interior of a building.**

That single line rules out an outdoor tank farm, an open salvage yard and outdoor materials processing. Whatever industry arrives on this land, the zoning already requires it to operate indoors. ^[52]

Industrial Character of the 43 Uses

The other twenty-nine are offices, medical, shops, restaurants, civic uses and open space.



Figure 2. Industrial character of the 43 permitted uses.

A definitional wrinkle worth noting

Parcel 9 permits a use called **Information Data Processing**, listed separately from **Data Center**. It would be easy to assume the first is harmless clerical work. That is not quite right: the federal industry category it corresponds to was renamed in 2022 and now explicitly covers cloud storage and computing infrastructure.

What protects the distinction is structural rather than definitional. Where an ordinance lists "Data Center" separately, that specific listing governs and the general one must mean the remainder. Even so, if the City ever tightens its rules, defining both terms precisely is worth doing. San Angelo, Texas has already written that definition and it can simply be adopted. ^[29]

3

Methodology

How the uses were compared

To compare a warehouse against a hospital against a data center, you need to measure them all the same way. Here are the seven yardsticks used throughout this report, and what each one actually means.

Yardstick	What it means	Why people care
Traffic	Vehicle trips in and out per day, and how many are trucks	Trucks are loud, damage pavement, and change how a road feels
Noise	Sound level at the property line, measured in dBA	It is the single most common complaint at every kind of facility
Water	Gallons per day, and where the wastewater goes	Lavon sits next to the reservoir that supplies much of the region
Jobs	Permanent positions, not construction, and pay	Construction jobs leave. Permanent ones stay
Tax value	Taxable value per acre, and who collects it	It is the main thing a city gets out of any development
Electricity	Power demand, and who pays for the wires	Large users can shift costs onto everyone else's bill
Hours	Whether it runs during the day or around the clock	A 3 a.m. shift change is a different neighbor than a 9-to-5

♪ A note on decibels, since they come up constantly

A decibel scale is not like inches. Every 10 dBA roughly doubles how loud something seems to a person.

For reference: a quiet bedroom at night is around 30 dBA. A refrigerator hum is about 40. Normal conversation is about 60. A vacuum cleaner is about 70. Most Texas cities set their nighttime limit at residential property lines somewhere between 55 and 65 dBA.

So when a number below says "45 dBA at the property line," that is quieter than a refrigerator, and when it says 70, that is a vacuum running outside your window.

Why per acre, and not per building

Most numbers in this report are given per acre. That is deliberate. A business that creates 500 jobs sounds better than one that creates 50 until you learn the first one needs 200 acres and the second needs four. Per-acre figures let you compare things that come in very different sizes, which is the only way this exercise works.

4

Use Comparison

Traffic, jobs, water, power and noise

IN THIS SECTION

- **Traffic is where the data center wins.** A drive-through restaurant generates over a hundred times more trips per acre.
- **Jobs are where it loses.** Comparable Texas campuses employ 50 to 100 people.
- **Water depends entirely on cooling design** — the same company's sites range from 27 to 2.7 million gallons a day.
- **Electricity is in a category of its own**, two to three orders of magnitude above anything else on the list.

The 43 uses fall into about eleven families. What follows compares them on the things people actually raise at meetings. Some of the results are not what either side of this argument expects.

Here is the whole thing at a glance. The rest of this part explains how each column was worked out, and where the numbers are shakier than they look.

Everything on one page

How much of each thing the main uses would bring. More is not automatically worse -- you decide which columns you care about.

	Traffic	Trucks	Noise	Water	Electricity	Jobs	Tax value
Data center	low	low	depends	depends	HIGH	low	HIGH
Warehouse / distribution	medium	HIGH	medium	low	low	low	medium
Fulfillment center	HIGH	medium	medium	low	low	HIGH	medium
Manufacturing	HIGH	medium	medium	medium	medium	HIGH	medium
Machining & welding	medium	medium	HIGH	medium	medium	medium	medium
Truck & contractor yard	medium	medium	HIGH	low	low	low	low
Industrial laundry	medium	medium	medium	HIGH	medium	medium	medium
Hospital & medical	HIGH	low	medium	HIGH	medium	HIGH	depends
Retail & restaurants	HIGH	low	medium	medium	low	medium	medium
Offices	medium	none	low	low	low	medium	medium
Civic & open space	low	none	low	medium	none	none	none

none
low
medium
HIGH
depends

Two entries deserve a second look. A data center's water and noise are marked 'depends' because both are set by design choices, not by the use itself. A hospital's tax value is marked 'depends' because a nonprofit hospital can lawfully pay no property tax at all, while a for-profit one pays in full. Civic uses and public parks pay none by definition.

Figure 3. The comparison in one picture.

Traffic: the data center is the quiet one

This is the clearest finding in the whole report, and it cuts against the worry. A data center is close to the least busy thing that could be built on this land. Almost nobody works there, so almost nobody drives there.

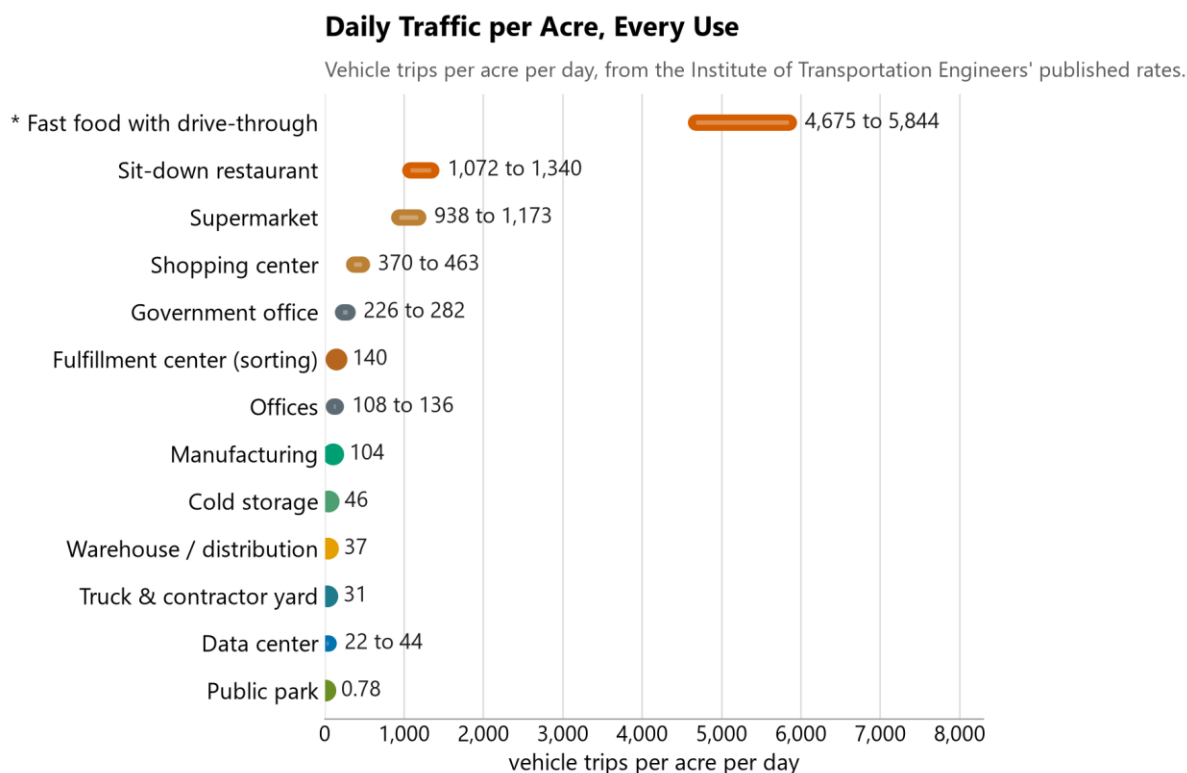


Figure 4. Daily vehicle trips per acre, across every kind of use.

The surprise in that chart is not where the data center sits. It is where the shops sit. The uses people most often ask for instead of industry are the busiest things on the entire list. A drive-through restaurant generates roughly **600 times** the traffic per acre of a public park, and more than **100 times** a data center. ^[26]

Trucks are a separate question, and the answer surprised me

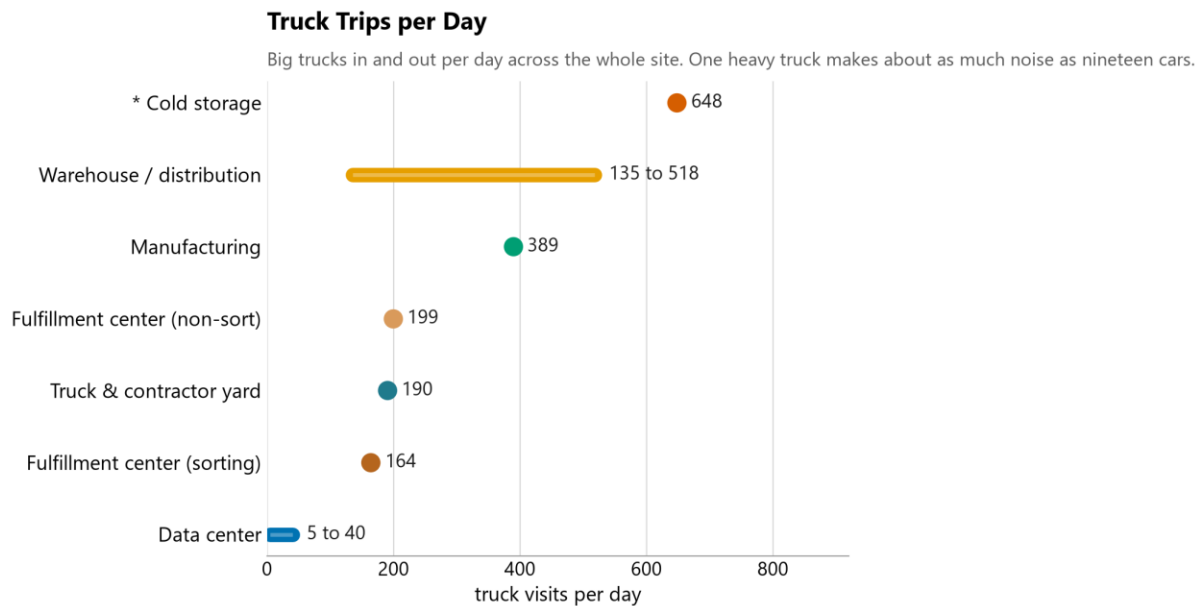


Figure 5. Truck visits per day across the whole site.

► Why one truck matters more than one car

Federal highway research puts one heavy truck at roughly the noise of **nineteen cars** at 35 mph.

[8]

On pavement the gap is far wider. A loaded tractor-trailer does about **a thousand times** the road damage of a loaded van, because damage rises with roughly the fourth power of axle weight. [9]

Federal cost-allocation work puts the wear at 0.1 cents per mile for a car against 40.9 cents for a five-axle combination truck. [10]

So 500 truck visits is not 500 cars' worth of impact. It is closer to ten thousand.

Note the oddity in the chart. A sorting fulfillment center makes the **most** total traffic on the list and about **a third** the truck traffic of a plain warehouse. Its traffic is employees in cars, not trucks. [7] Two very different kinds of neighbor, and zoning calls them the same thing.

So why not just put shops there?

This is the most common suggestion anybody makes about this land, and it deserves a straight answer rather than a brush-off. The answer is arithmetic.

Commercial Land Lavon Has, and Can Fill

Acres of commercial land, against what the town's population actually supports.

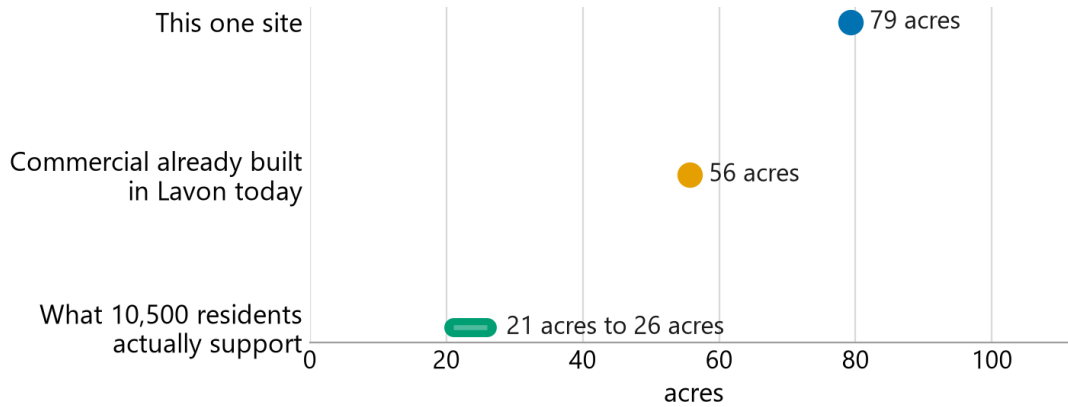


Figure 6. Commercial acreage in Lavon, against what the town can support.

⚠ The town cannot fill the commercial land it already has

Americans have about **24.5 square feet of retail per person** -- the highest rate in the world, and widely considered over-built already. ^[27] At that rate, Lavon's roughly 10,500 residents support somewhere around **21 to 26 acres** of shops. Total.

Lavon already has **55.7 acres of commercial property on its tax roll**, across 43 properties. ^[19] That is more than double what the population supports, and it is what has actually been built and is sitting on the roll today.

Filling another 79 acres with retail would need a population of **32,000 to 40,000** -- three to four times the town. At that size it is not a shopping center, it is a regional mall, and it would need to pull shoppers from ten miles out. Wylie and Rockwall, both several times Lavon's size and with established shopping, are already sitting in that trade area.

So retail is not an unused alternative for this land. The town has already built more commercial acreage than its own population supports, and much of it sits empty. Wanting shops instead of industry is a completely reasonable preference. It is just not something zoning can deliver, because zoning cannot create customers.

Jobs: where the data center genuinely loses

This is the honest weak spot, and any document that skips past it is not worth reading. Data centers do not employ many people once they are running.

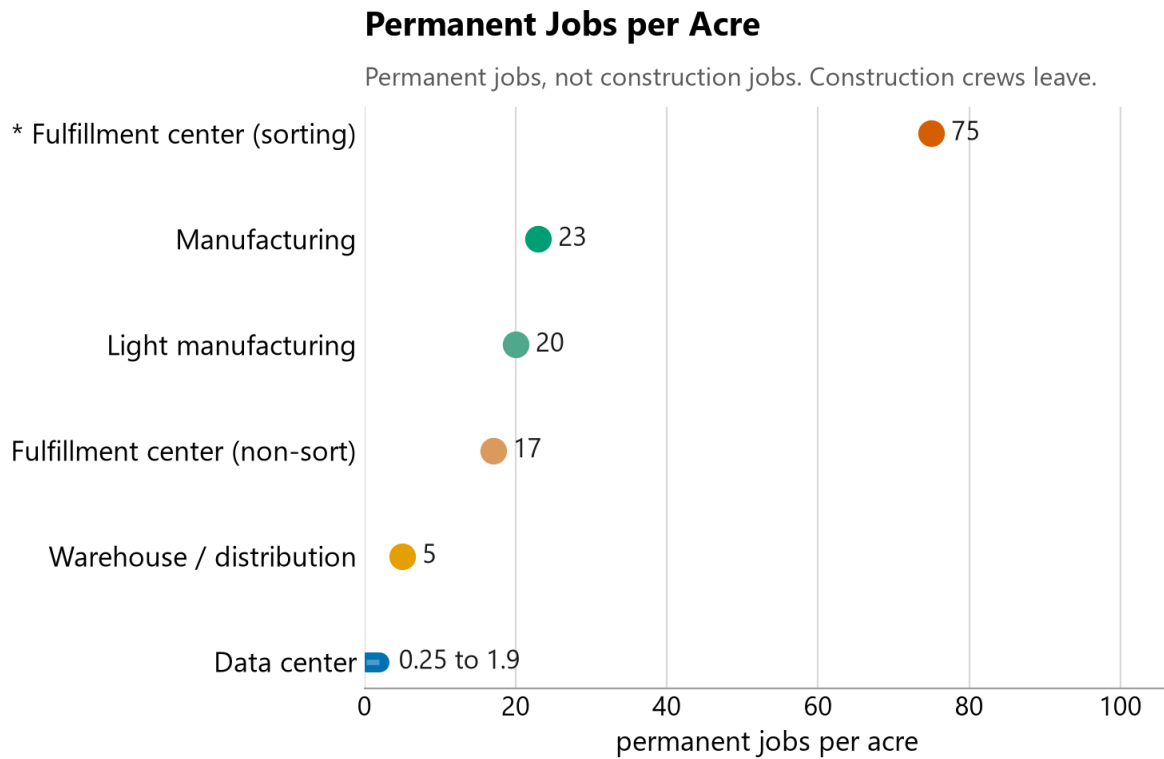


Figure 7. Permanent jobs per acre. Construction jobs are not counted.

Real disclosed numbers: Meta's Temple, Texas campus is more than 800 million dollars and about 900,000 square feet, and employs roughly **100** people. Google's Midlothian site employs about **50**.^{[11] [12]} A review of construction permits and company disclosures across more than 1,200 US data centers found that even the largest generally employ fewer than 150 permanent workers, and some as few as 25.^[13]

Construction is different. Meta's Temple build peaked above **1,200 workers** and ran about two years.^[11] But construction crews leave, and they usually leave long before the tax breaks expire.

⚠ The catch inside the phrase “qualifying jobs”

To claim the state tax break, an operator must create 20 or 40 “qualifying jobs.” Texas defines that as paying at least 120 percent of the county’s average weekly wage. For Collin County that is about **\$110,000 a year**.^[14]

That figure is **higher than the Dallas-Fort Worth median** for nearly every job in a data center except systems administrator. Security guards here earn about \$36,700; electricians about \$59,000; heating and cooling techs about \$59,600.

So the promise is not 20 well-paid local jobs appearing. It is that the operator must identify 20 roles at that pay level to certify. The people actually on site day to day, in security, cleaning and grounds, are usually contractors, and they are not counted.

Electricity: where nothing else is close

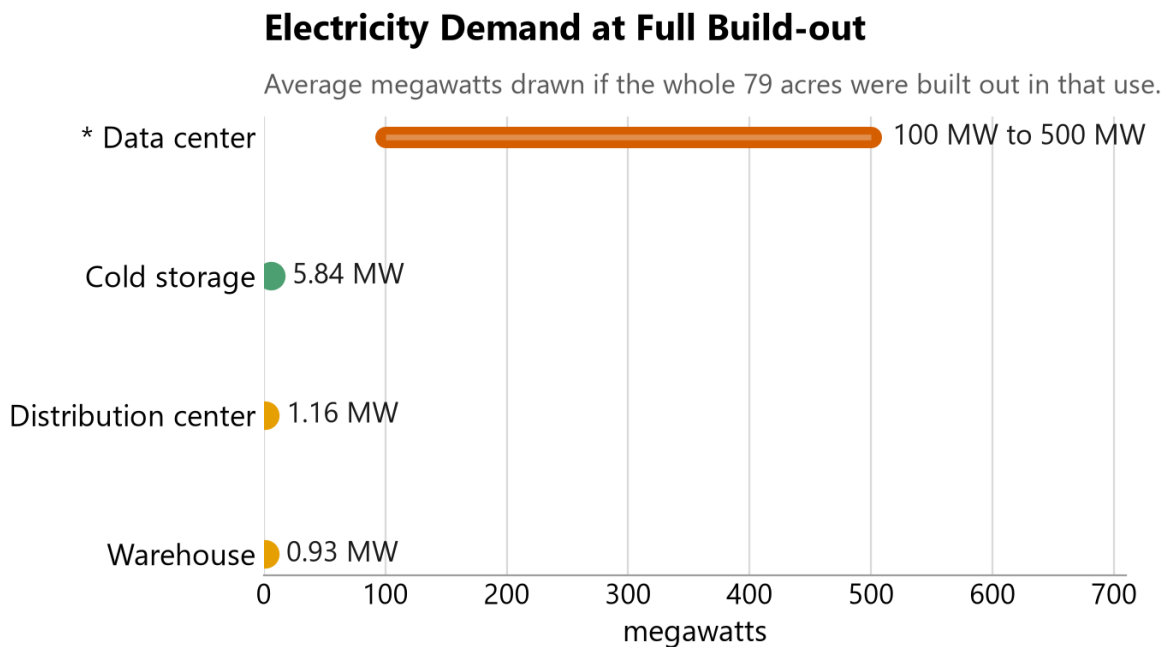


Figure 8. Average power draw at full build-out. Each gridline is ten times the last.

A big-box distribution center on all 79 acres would draw roughly **one megawatt**. Warehouses actually use less electricity per square foot than the average commercial building.^[15] A hyperscale data center is measured in hundreds of megawatts. That is not a bigger version of the same thing. It is a different category, and it is the reason this particular use draws attention that a warehouse would not.

► The industrial uses are not the water story people expect

Metal machining, welding and fabrication -- the uses that sound heaviest on the list -- are among the **lightest water users on it.**

Real Collin County examples reported to the state: Smith Systems Manufacturing 893 gallons a day, Stewart Systems 1,785, Regal Research 3,571, Tenth Street Industries 8,927. ^[53] That is the water use of roughly **three to thirty houses.**

The alarming manufacturing water figures people cite come from semiconductor plants and chemical works. Texas Instruments' Collin County fab uses about 2.6 million gallons a day.

Neither of those is a permitted use on this land.

► One water figure that stopped me short

A city park is the gentlest thing on this entire list. It generates almost no traffic, no noise and no truck movements.

But keeping 79 acres of Texas turf green through a Collin County summer takes roughly **4,400 to 6,600 gallons per acre per day** ^[54] -- which across the whole site works out to somewhere around **350,000 to 520,000 gallons a day.**

That is in the same range as Google's real data center in Midlothian, which consumes about 372,000 gallons a day. I am not suggesting parks are a problem. I am saying that water numbers only mean something once you have something to compare them against, and almost nobody does that comparison.

Water: it depends almost entirely on one design choice

Water is the argument where both sides are usually wrong, because the honest answer spans a range so wide it is hard to believe. The chart below is one company's own published figures for nine of its own sites in the same year.

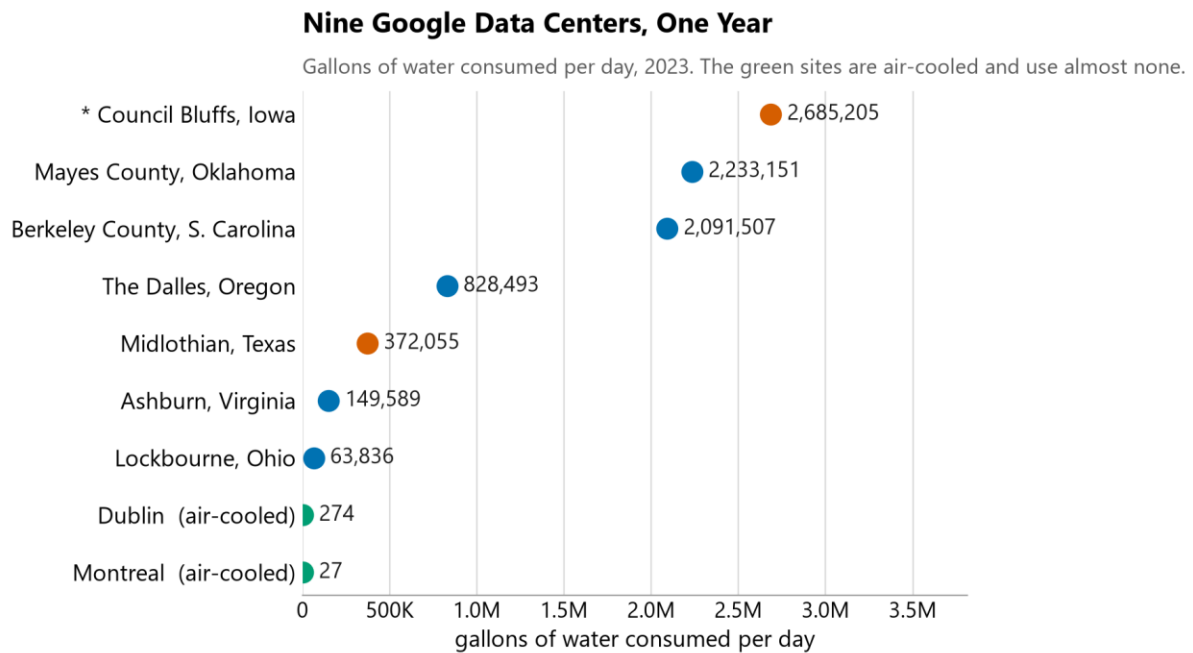


Figure 9. Water consumed per day at nine Google data centers, 2023.

Twenty-seven gallons a day at Montreal. Two point seven million a day in Iowa. Same company, same year, same standards. ^[16] The difference is whether the building is cooled by evaporating water or by air and sealed loops.

► The one question that settles the water argument

How many megawatts, and what cooling design? Everything else follows from those two answers.

A sealed, air-cooled building uses almost no water once it is filled. A building cooled by evaporation can use millions of gallons a day. Asking for the cooling design **in writing, as a condition** rather than as a promise, is the single most useful thing anyone could do about water on this site.

One caveat worth knowing: a sealed building still uses water indirectly, at the power plants that supply it. Federal lab research puts that indirect figure at roughly ten times the on-site number. ^[17] “Zero water” is never quite zero.

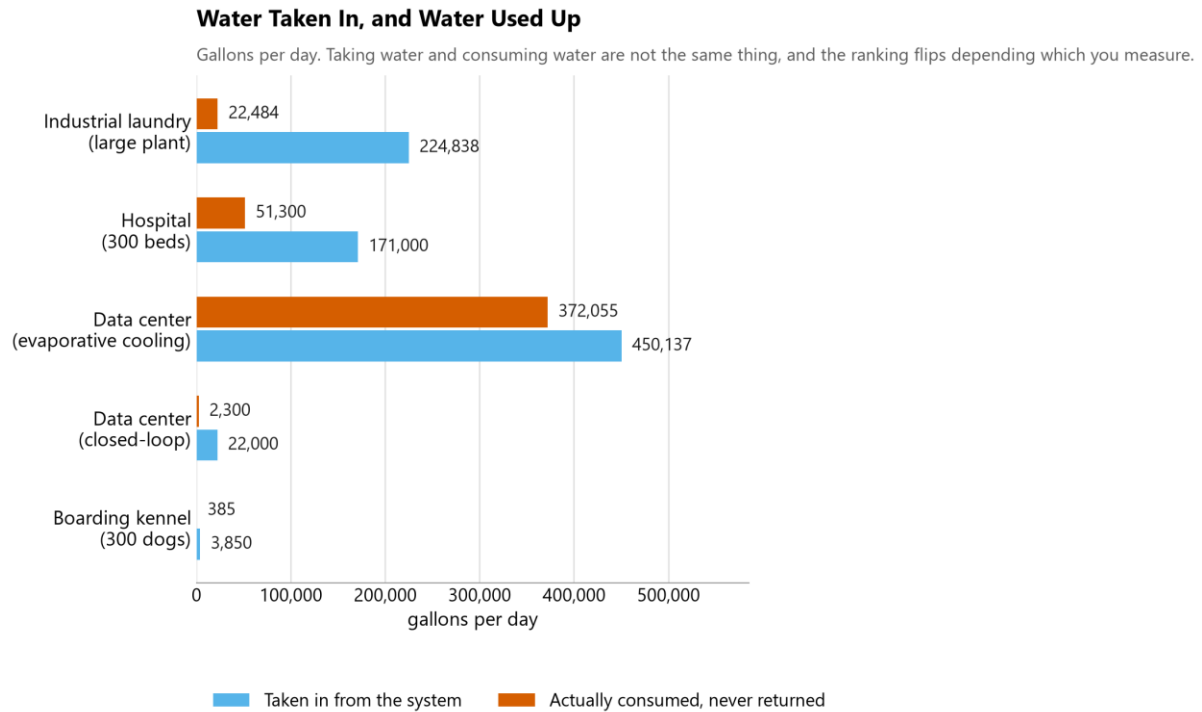


Figure 10. Water taken in, and water actually consumed, by use.

And what all of that means locally

Numbers this large are hard to hold in your head without something to compare them against, so here is the comparison. Lavon's water comes through the North Texas Municipal Water District, which supplies **more than 400 million gallons a day** to over 2.3 million people across 70-odd communities. ^[31] Lake Lavon is one of its sources.

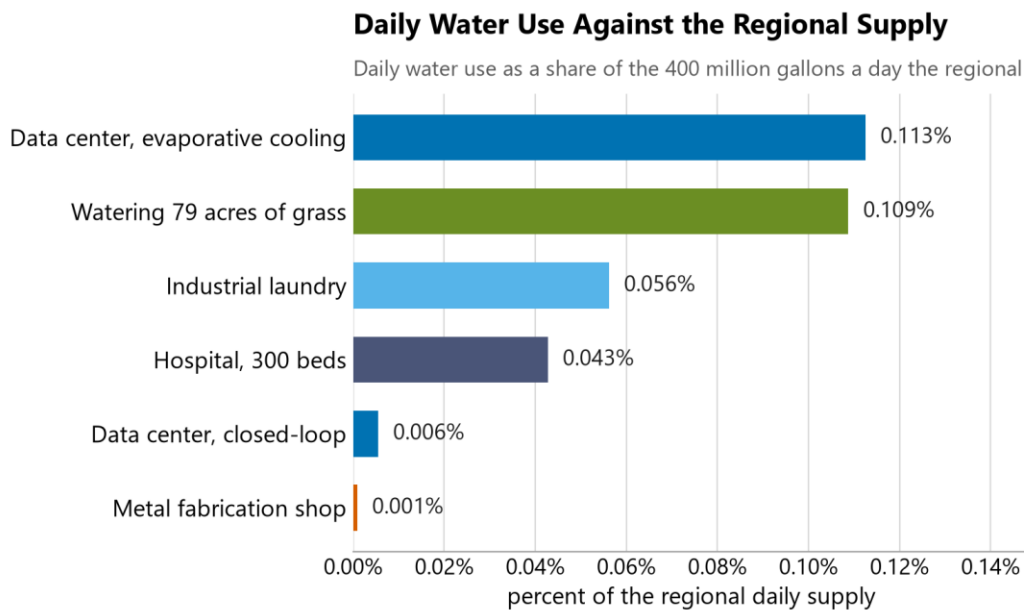


Figure 11. Daily water use as a share of the regional supply.

► Two honest conclusions from that, pointing opposite ways

At a regional scale, even the thirstiest version of this is small. A data center cooled by evaporation, using as much as Google's real Texas campus, would be about **one tenth of one percent** of what the district supplies each day. Watering 79 acres of grass would be roughly the same. These are not numbers that drain a reservoir.

But regional supply is not the same as local plumbing. The district having water to sell says nothing about whether the pipes serving that particular corner of town can deliver it, or what it costs to upsize them. That is a Bear Creek Special Utility District question and a city question, not a regional one, and it is a fair thing to ask about.

Worth knowing too: the district's own long-range plan expects regional demand to **double to more than 800 million gallons a day by 2080**, and it includes building a new, deeper intake at Lake Lavon. ^[31] Growth is the pressure on this system, and houses are most of that growth.

The second chart carries a distinction that gets lost constantly. Taking water and consuming it are not the same. An industrial laundry takes in more water than a sealed data center but returns about **90 percent** of it to the sewer. A data center cooled by evaporation returns almost none, because the water leaves as steam. ^[18] ^[16] Measured by what is actually used up, the ranking flips.

5

Fiscal Impact

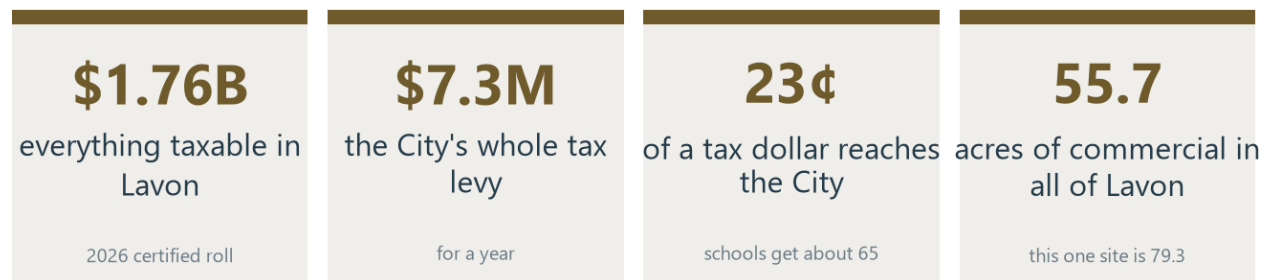
Tax base, revenue sharing and incentives

IN THIS SECTION

- Only about **23 cents** of a property tax dollar reaches the City. The school district takes roughly 65.
- **45 percent of the City's increment from this land is already committed** to a tax zone running to 2072 — but the school district appears to keep its full share.
- The state sales tax exemption for data centers cost Texas about **\$1 billion in 2025**, revised up nearly eightfold in two years.

Money is the part most often quoted and least often checked. Here is the arithmetic, with the assumptions in the open so you can disagree with them specifically.

First, the size of the thing we are talking about



Everything in Lavon that can be taxed adds up to about **1.76 billion dollars** of taxable value, on a roll of 6,035 properties. ^[19] That is the yardstick. Any number about this site only means something next to it.

One fact from that roll reframes this entire argument. Lavon contains **43 commercial properties totalling 55.7 acres**, and **two industrial properties totalling one acre**. That is the whole non-residential base of the city. ^[19]

► Which means this site is not a normal piece of land here

At 79.3 acres, this one property is **larger than every commercial property in Lavon put together**, with room to spare.

Whatever gets built there will be the biggest non-residential thing in town by a wide margin. That is true of a data center, a warehouse, a hospital, or a shopping center. It is a fact about the size of the land, not about any particular use.

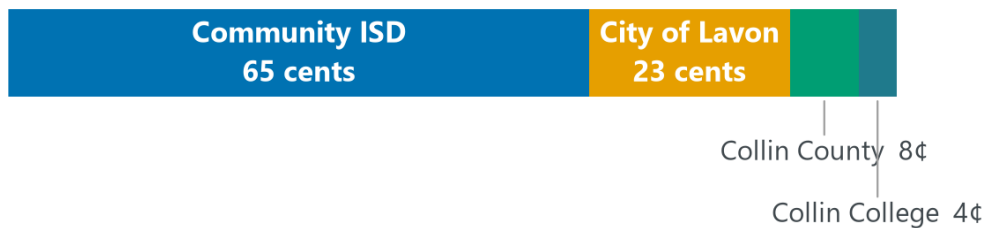
For scale, the site is about **3 percent of all the appraised land in the city**.

Lavon today is a town whose tax base is houses. Every one of its twenty largest taxpayers is a residential builder. ^[20] An acre of housing here carries about \$1.9 million in market value; an acre of existing commercial land, about \$1.2 million. ^[19]

Where a property tax dollar actually goes

Where a Lavon Property Tax Dollar Goes

Combined 2026 rates for a property inside Lavon. The school district takes the largest share.



City figure is the FY2026-27 proposed rate of \$0.433807 per \$100. Other rates as published for 2026.

Figure 12. The split of a property tax dollar inside Lavon.

This is the correction most needed in this conversation. When people say a project would be good for Lavon's tax base, roughly **23 cents** of each dollar reaches the City. About **65 cents** goes to Community ISD. ^[21]

► **Which means the school district matters more than the city here**

The biggest share of any tax benefit, and the biggest share of any tax break, runs through the school district, not city hall.

The state program that can limit school taxes for a large project is negotiated between the company, the **school district**, and the Governor's office. The City of Lavon is not a party to it. ^[24]

So residents who care most about the tax question should be at **school board** meetings as well as council meetings. That is not where this argument has been happening.

What a large project would actually be worth

Assessed values for data centers run roughly **\$714 to \$863 per square foot** of building, based on real figures from Loudoun County, Virginia and a Texas agreement in Lancaster. ^{[25] [73]} How much building goes on 79 acres is a design choice, not a fixed number, so this is a scenario rather than a forecast.

If the buildings total	Taxable value would be about	City's share each year	Community ISD's share
500,000 sq ft	\$357M to \$432M	\$1.5M to \$1.9M	\$4.3M to \$5.2M
1,000,000 sq ft	\$714M to \$863M	\$3.1M to \$3.7M	\$8.6M to \$10.4M
1,500,000 sq ft	\$1.07B to \$1.29B	\$4.6M to \$5.6M	\$12.9M to \$15.6M

For scale, the City's entire property tax levy today is about **7.3 million dollars a year**. ^[19] So the middle row would add somewhere between 40 and 50 percent on top of everything the city currently collects. That is a real number, and it is the strongest argument in the project's favor.

► Three things that shrink that number, and one that protects it

Most of the value is equipment, not building. Servers are taxed as business personal property and they depreciate fast. In Loudoun County, computer equipment alone accounted for about \$685 million of tax revenue. ^[25] That value has to be replaced every three to five years to stay high.

The state sales tax break is large. Texas exempts qualifying data centers from state sales tax on equipment. That break cost about **\$1.0 billion in 2025** and is projected near \$1.75 billion by 2030. ^[22] In 2023 the state had projected the 2025 figure at \$130 million. The estimate rose **almost eightfold in under two years.**

Abatements are negotiable and often granted. Any city or county share can be reduced by agreement, and those agreements are where the real terms live.

But the local sales tax is not exempted. The Texas Comptroller is explicit that the break applies only to the state's 6.25 percent, and that local sales tax must still be collected. ^[23] Lavon's local share stays.

And a fifty-year commitment almost nobody is discussing

This is the part of the money question I did not expect to find, and I have not seen it raised anywhere in the public conversation.

⚠️ Forty-five cents of every new city tax dollar is already committed

In **October 2021** the City created a Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone over the Elevon development, known as TIRZ Number Two. ^[32] Under its terms, **45 percent of the City's property tax increment** inside that zone goes into a fund that reimburses developer costs for public projects, rather than to general city services. The County contributes the same share if it signed on.

It runs for fifty years. The last payment is due January 31, 2072.

The fund is split into a residential account and a separate **commercial account**, which is where a business park use would fall.

The City's own overview map of the zone shows it running south to FM 2755, which is where these 79.3 acres sit. ^[33] An overview map is not a parcel list, so the definitive answer is the zone's parcel exhibit. But on the available evidence, **this land appears to be inside TIRZ Number Two.**

If that is right, every figure in the table above needs adjusting. **The City would keep about 55 cents of each new property tax dollar from this site**, not all of it, for roughly the next 46 years. The middle scenario drops from something near \$3.7 million a year to closer to \$2 million.

► **But it cuts the other way too, and this half matters more**

The zone ordinance names only the **City and the County** as contributors to the TIRZ fund. **The school district is not listed.**

If that reading holds, **Community ISD would receive its full levy** from anything built here. Since the school district collects about 65 cents of every property tax dollar in Lavon, that is where most of the money was heading anyway.

So the honest summary is this: the city gets less than the headline suggests, and the schools get more than people assume. **Both halves are worth knowing before anybody argues about tax revenue again.**

The lesson from the county that did this first

Loudoun County, Virginia has more data centers than anywhere else in the world. They now provide roughly **38 percent of its general fund revenue** from about **4 percent** of its commercial parcels. ^[25] The county cut its property tax rate from \$1.145 to \$0.805 over ten years, the lowest in its region.

That is the upside, delivered. But Loudoun's own response to it is the more instructive part. The county created a **Revenue Stabilization Fund**, setting aside about 10 percent of data center tax revenue, explicitly to manage what it calls the risks of relying on it. ^[25] The place with the most experience treats this revenue as something to hedge against, not something to spend fully. That is worth copying regardless of what anyone thinks of the industry.

6

Local Impacts

Noise, emergency services and environment

IN THIS SECTION

- A modern facility can measure **compliant at the property line and still generate real complaints**. Constant beats loud.
- **Lavon has no numeric noise limit at all** — the ordinance has no decibel figure in it.
- The Fire Department runs **one station with paid staff, typically six per shift**, and recently added a **3,000 gallon tender**, against a national benchmark of 15 firefighters arriving in 9 minutes for a town this dense.

Charts are one thing. Living next to something is another. This part is about what you would actually see, hear and smell, and it is the part where the data center's reputation and its measurements do not match.

Noise: the honest version

Here is the most useful thing I found on noise, and it does not comfortably suit either side of the argument.

♪ Loudoun County, Virginia, 2023

Residents living near a data center complained about the noise. The company measured it. The readings came back **below** the county's 55-decibel limit. The facility was, on paper, compliant. The company then went back and found it could meet its cooling needs with about **20 percent less fan power**, and turned it down anyway. ^[56]

Both things are true at once: it was within the rules, and people were genuinely bothered. A data center hum is constant, it is low-pitched, and it never stops. That is a different kind of annoying than a loud thing that happens sometimes.

So the argument that a data center would be deafening is not supported. The argument that being legally compliant is not the same as being pleasant to live beside **is** supported, by the industry's own measurements. Anyone going to a public meeting should know which of those two arguments they are making.

► A gap in this report I am not going to paper over

Almost every decibel figure published for data center equipment is quoted with **no distance attached**, and a decibel number without a distance is meaningless. Sound drops by about 6 decibels every time you double the distance from it.

I could not find manufacturer specifications giving a sound level at a stated distance for large backup generators. Rather than repeat a number I cannot stand behind, I am telling you it is missing. If somebody quotes you a generator decibel figure, the first question is: measured how far away?

Trucks, backup alarms and the 3 a.m. problem

This is where warehousing and truck-related uses are genuinely harder on neighbors.

Refrigeration units on trailers run **continuously**, at about 73 decibels measured at 50 feet. ^[57]

Reversing alarms are required by federal safety rules to be **audible above the surrounding noise**, whatever that level happens to be. ^[58] They cannot be quieted into compliance. That is the point of them.

And these operations frequently run around the clock. Traffic counts at working distribution facilities show shift peaks at 7:30 in the evening rather than at rush hour. ^[59] A data center, by contrast, has almost nobody arriving at any hour.

Who comes when something goes wrong

This turned out to be the part of the research I did not expect, and it applies to every use on the list, not just the one people are arguing about.

Lavon Fire Department operates from **one station**, staffed by full-time and part-time firefighters, **typically six on duty per shift**. It runs an aerial truck, a pumper, two brush trucks and a command vehicle, and recently acquired a **tender carrying 3,000 gallons** through a matching grant, for areas where hydrants or municipal water are limited or absent.

⚠ Two things about that worth knowing

The department is still titled a volunteer fire department, but it operates with paid firefighters only. Chapter 6 is still titled Volunteer Fire Department and still says firefighter positions shall be volunteer. ^[47] The proposed budget carries 18 fire positions, up from one in 2018. ^[48] The paperwork has not caught up with the payroll.

The national staffing benchmark for a town at Lavon's density is 15 firefighters arriving within 9 minutes, 90 percent of the time. Lavon's population density puts it in the urban category of that standard, not the suburban or rural one. ^[49] That benchmark counts everyone who arrives, including mutual aid, not just the crew on duty at one station.

Two more things I could not find, which are themselves worth noting. **Lavon publishes no call volume and no response times anywhere** that I could locate. And the city applied for a federal firefighter staffing grant and did not receive it; the council packet records that since the grant was not awarded, those funds remain available. ^[50]

None of this is an argument against any particular use. It is context for all of them. Fire codes are written on the assumption that a department can arrive and hold a line, and how big that department is remains a choice the city makes in its budget.

Light, air and the things nobody asks about

- **Light.** Any 24-hour operation across 79 acres means security lighting all night. Lavon currently has no lighting standard that would control it. There is a way to get one, and it is in Part 7.
- **Air.** Collin County is in the Dallas-Fort Worth ozone nonattainment area, rated "Serious" under the current federal standard. That is already true, and it means diesel traffic is not a neutral issue here the way it might be elsewhere. ^[60]
- **Stormwater.** Industrial development runs about 72 percent hard surface, commercial about 85. On the heavy clay soils around Lavon, that meaningfully changes where rain goes. ^[61] It applies to every use on the list, including the quiet ones.
- **Roads.** A loaded tractor-trailer does roughly a thousand times the pavement damage of a van. Federal studies find heavy trucks pay only about half of the road costs they cause. ^[10] The rest lands on whoever maintains the road.

7

Case Studies

Outcomes in comparable jurisdictions

IN THIS SECTION

- **Midlothian:** after seven years, Google is the second largest taxpayer at 2 percent of the roll, employing 100 people.
- **Abilene:** property tax up 24 percent in one year, and the tax rate fell about a tenth of a cent.
- **Lancaster, Pennsylvania** secured \$20 million behind a letter of credit and granted **zero** tax abatement.
- **El Paso** signed \$800 million of investment for 50 jobs, with no jobs clawback. Texas law makes that clause optional.

Lavon is not the first small town to face this. Some places did well, some did badly, and a few wrote down rules worth copying. What follows comes from audited budgets, adopted ordinances and signed agreements, not from headlines.

The two closest Texas examples, and what they actually delivered

Midlothian is a city of about 44,000 south of Dallas. Google has operated a data center there since 2018, under the name Sharka LLC. Seven years in, here is where it sits on the city's tax roll.

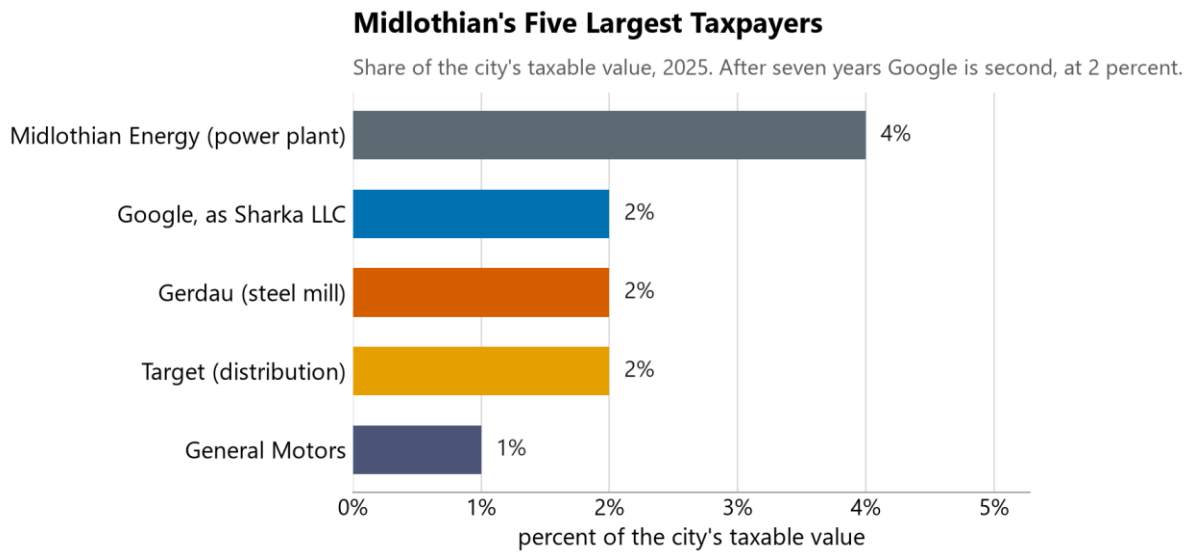


Figure 13. Midlothian's five largest taxpayers, 2025 tax year.

► Google is 2 percent of Midlothian's tax roll, and employs 100 people

Not the largest taxpayer. Second, behind a power plant, and barely ahead of a steel mill. ^[34]

The city's own annual report lists Google Midlothian at **100 employees**. The Gerdau steel mill and the Target distribution center employ about **1,250 each**.

Midlothian also grants Google an **85 percent abatement on real property and 100 percent on personal property**, and abated about **\$8 million** in property taxes in one year across all its agreements.

This is the most useful single comparison in the report, because it is neither a disaster nor a windfall. It is a solid second-place taxpayer with a small payroll.

Abilene is the live one. Two data centers there became the city's number one and number two taxpayers, together about **4 percent** of assessed value. City property tax revenue jumped **\$18 million, up 24 percent, in a single year**. ^[35]

► And the tax rate fell by about a tenth of a cent

Abilene's rate went from \$0.7506 to \$0.7495. A 22 percent surge in taxable value bought homeowners **eleven hundredths of one cent**.

That is the honest headline, and it works for both sides of this argument. The money is real and it is large. It did not show up as a meaningfully smaller tax bill, because cities generally spend new revenue on services rather than rebating it.

Abilene also did something worth copying: it treated construction-phase sales tax as **one-time money**, put \$1.9 million into reserves specifically for the construction period, and deliberately held its tax rate flat *"until taxable values associated with the data center development have demonstrated long-term stability."* That is disciplined, and it is free.

The documented complaint in Abilene, incidentally, has not been noise or water. It has been **housing costs** during the construction boom. That is a real effect and it is not one that shows up in any zoning ordinance.

The town most like Lavon anywhere in the country

Prineville, Oregon has about 11,700 people. It hosts data centers for both Meta and Apple. Its population, its size and its situation are closer to Lavon's than anywhere else I found.

Prineville's City Finances, Before and After

City revenue before and after the data centers, in millions of dollars. Population about 11,700.

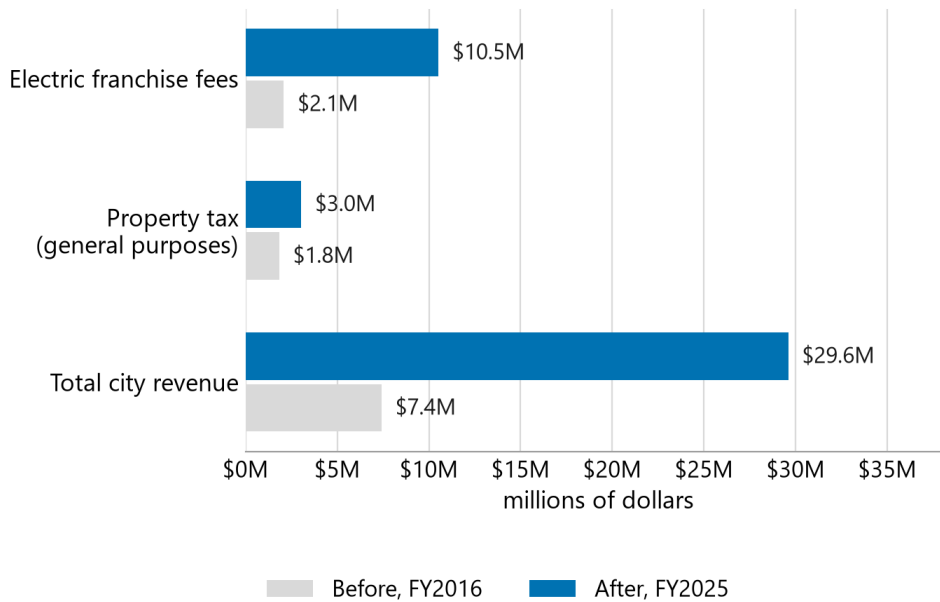


Figure 14. Prineville's city finances before and after.

⚠ Prineville taxed the electricity, not the buildings

Its property tax revenue roughly doubled. Its **electric franchise fee revenue went from \$2.1 million to \$10.5 million** -- a 5 percent cut of electricity sales inside the city. ^[36] The buildings are largely tax-exempt. The power running through them is not.

Median household income more than doubled, from \$31,669 to \$67,743. Meta is now the town's largest employer at about **600 people**, more than a tenth of local employment.

But the city abated \$22.5 million in property taxes in a single year -- seven times what it collected in general property tax. And the school district abated **\$29 million, about \$8,576 per student**, the second-worst per-pupil loss in Oregon. ^[37] Enrollment stayed flat while the tax base tripled.

One more thing worth saying out loud: the franchise windfall is partly a **tax on residents' own power bills**. Prineville's own audit attributes the increase to electricity rate rises of about 44 percent in three years.

The agreement worth reading twice

Lancaster, Pennsylvania signed a community benefits agreement with a data center developer in November 2025. It is the most complete example I found of a city getting things in writing, and it is publicly posted. ^[38]

What they got	How it is secured
\$20 million in community funds	A bank letter of credit posted up front. Miss a payment and the city draws on it.
A noise limit set by the site's own measured quiet	Pre-construction sound readings at the neighbors' property lines become the ceiling.
Water capped at 20,000 gallons a day	Written into the agreement as a hard number.
Emergency response costs above \$25,000	Reimbursed to the city within 30 days of invoice.
An annual public compliance report	Delivered to council every April.
Obligations that survive a sale	They run with the land. A new owner inherits all of it.
A real remedy	After a cure period, the ultimate consequence is shutting the building down.

And the detail that makes the rest of it land: the city states plainly that the developer **is not receiving any tax breaks**. Twenty million dollars in, zero abatement out.

The opposite example, from Texas

⚠ Sixteen million dollars of investment per permanent job

El Paso signed a tax abatement agreement with a data center developer in December 2023: a minimum **\$800 million investment**, an **80 percent abatement over ten years**, in exchange for **50 permanent jobs**. ^[39]

The agreement's own words on what happens if the company falls short: *"the City's sole remedy ... will be the City's right to terminate this Agreement,"* and *"Company will not be required to repay any Abatement."*

Here is the part that matters for Lavon. Texas law **requires** a clawback if a company fails to build what it promised. It makes the clawback for failing to create the promised **jobs** entirely optional.

^[40] El Paso did not include one.

That is one paragraph in one agreement, and it is probably the single highest-leverage sentence a small town can add to any incentive it ever offers.

A county of 18,000 people wrote the strictest rules in the country

Montour County, Pennsylvania has about 18,000 residents -- smaller than Collin County by a factor of forty. In 2026 it adopted data center rules with real numbers: noise limits measured at the property line, a **1,000-foot setback** from schools, churches, daycares, parks and homes, mandatory water studies the county can hire its own hydrologist to check, and a **decommissioning bond at 110 percent of the cost of tear-down**, re-estimated every five years. ^[41]

► What happened when they proposed it

At a February 2026 planning commission meeting, an attorney for Amazon proposed edits. The county's own residents documented what was asked for: narrow the protected-places definition to houses only, exempt backup generators from the noise limits, delete the vibration studies, delete the water studies, delete the property-value study, delete the dark sky requirement, and delete decommissioning entirely. ^[42]

In the words of one resident who was there: *"Decommissioning. Amazon definitely didn't want anything to do with that."*

The county kept all of it. The ordinance was adopted as written.

Whatever anyone thinks about data centers, that is worth knowing. A county of eighteen thousand people held its ground on standards, and the standards are public and copyable.

And the best Texas template, adopted this summer

Mesquite is a home rule city in the Dallas area, like Lavon. On July 20, 2026 it adopted data center rules that are the most directly transferable thing I found anywhere. ^[43]

- **Noise, with actual numbers.** 65 decibels by day, 60 at night at the property line, and **55 at night where the site adjoins a residential district.** Measured at whichever point reads higher: the property line, or the wall of the nearest home.
- **Low-frequency limits.** Separate caps of 55 decibels at 16, 31.5 and 63 hertz. That is the answer to the low, constant hum that ordinary decibel readings miss entirely.
- **A measurement method.** Class 1 meter, octave-band analysis, tonality assessment, performed by a licensed acoustics engineer. A limit nobody can measure is decorative.
- **Setbacks split by what makes the noise.** 300 feet for buildings from residential, but **500 feet for generators, cooling equipment, transformers and fuel tanks.**
- **Water, which is the big one.** Only **closed-loop or recycled cooling is permitted.** Using city drinking water for open evaporative cooling is **prohibited outright.**
- **A verification step.** A post-construction sound study within 60 days of opening, and immediate correction if it fails.

That water provision deserves a second look. The single largest uncertainty in this entire report - whether a data center here would use almost no water or millions of gallons a day -- is a question Mesquite simply answered by ordinance, in advance, for everybody. It did not require predicting who the tenant would be.

The mistakes that keep repeating

The mistake	What it looks like afterward
Zoning it by right and keeping no discretionary hook	The city has nothing left to trade when the applicant finally shows up.
Granting an abatement with no jobs clawback	Texas law makes that clawback optional. If you do not write it in, it does not exist.
Believing the headline jobs number	Midlothian's is 100. El Paso's agreement promises 50 for \$800 million.
Writing a noise rule with no number in it	Unenforceable in practice, and courts have struck down vaguer versions.
Never requiring a decommissioning plan	The building outlives the equipment inside it by decades.
Adopting a moratorium without solid legal footing	Hill County, Texas rescinded one after being sued for over \$100 million.
Letting the developer define the terms	"Data center" means whatever the ordinance says it means.
Spending construction-phase revenue as if it recurs	Abilene explicitly did not, and said so in its budget.

One claim I want to correct, because it is not supported

► There is no good evidence data centers lower nearby home values

The largest analysis available compared 43 matched ZIP codes and found **no measurable effect in either direction.** ^[45] In Loudoun County, Virginia -- the most data-center-dense place on earth -- residential values **rose.** ^[25]

That study excluded Texas and covered only two years, so it is not the last word. But it is the best evidence that exists, and it does not support the claim.

If you are worried about this land, the defensible argument is about noise, electricity and what happens if the building empties out. It is not about home values, and making that argument at a public meeting will cost you credibility you will want later.

8

Municipal Authority

What the City can and cannot require

IN THIS SECTION

- **Lavon is a home rule city**, which means it may do anything state law does not forbid.
- **Noise, lighting and construction hours are not on the list of rules that freeze** when a developer files.
- **Mesquite has already written the ordinance** — 55 dBA at night beside homes, low-frequency caps, and closed-loop cooling required.
- Leverage exists only while an applicant still needs something discretionary from the City.

This is the part that matters most, because it is the only part anybody can act on. It is also the part where I am least qualified, so I have written it as questions with the law attached rather than as answers. **None of this is legal advice.**

First, an honest map of who decides what

What the City Decides, and What It Does Not

Nearly every worry raised about this site is decided by one of these three.

THE CITY OF LAVON council and staff	WATER PROVIDERS NTMWD and Bear Creek SUD	THE STATE OF TEXAS grid operator, TCEQ, legislature
• Noise limits, if it adopts any • Outdoor lighting, with one extra step • Screening walls, buffers, landscaping • Setbacks, height, lot coverage • Site plan and plat review • Construction hours • Roads, traffic studies, fire access • Stormwater and drainage • Local tax abatement, if asked	• Whether there is water to sell • How much can be used • Sewer capacity and limits • How strong the wastewater may be • What a service contract costs	• Whether the grid can serve it • Who pays for new power lines • Air permits for generators • How often generators may run • Discharge permits • The state sales tax break • School tax limitation programs

This is the honest shape of the problem. The city's column is real and it is not nothing, but electricity, air permits and the state tax break are decided entirely somewhere else, by people who do not answer to Lavon voters.

Figure 15. Who actually holds each decision.

A great deal of the frustration around this issue comes from asking the city for things the city does not control. Lavon cannot decide how much electricity the grid will supply, who pays for new power lines, or whether the state gives away sales tax. What it does control is real, but it is narrower than the conversation assumes.

Two pieces of good news that have not made it into the argument

► Lavon is a home rule city

Voters adopted a home rule charter at an election on **November 8, 2022**.^[62] Some documents still floating around describe Lavon as a “general law” city. That is out of date.

The difference is not a technicality. A general law city can only do what state law specifically allows. A home rule city **can do anything state law does not forbid**.^[63] On noise, lighting and screening, that is a much stronger position than people have assumed.

► The rules that get frozen are a shorter list than you would think

Texas law does freeze certain rules in place once a developer files an application, so the goalposts cannot move mid-project. But the law names exactly which subjects get frozen: landscaping and tree preservation, open space, property classification, lot size, lot dimensions, lot coverage, and building size.^[64]

Noise is not on that list. Neither is lighting, construction hours, or screening walls.

And those protections start when somebody **files an application** — not when the city passes zoning.^[65] As of August 2026 the city says no application of any kind has been filed for this land.

^[2]

The nine-year clause, and why I am not going to tell you what it means

The zoning ordinance says development on these two parcels follows the business park standards “**as it exists on the date of the adoption of this ordinance ... for 9 years.**”^[1] The city advises that this nine-year period began in **October 2022**, with the original Elevon planned development ordinance rather than the December 2024 amendment, and that it pertains to **Parcel 9** under Section 1.3.58. That puts the end of it at roughly **October 2031**. Section 1.3.53 carries a parallel nine-year clause for **Parcel 8**, measured against the business park or retail standards.

Read plainly, that would mean new standards written during the current pause might not reach the one site everybody is arguing about. It is a promise the city wrote into its own ordinance rather than a protection state law grants, and whether a council can bind its successors that way on health and safety questions is a real legal question. I could not find a Texas case settling it.

The city has indicated that in most relevant areas, changes were approved in the code, which would narrow the question considerably. It is still worth having the city attorney put the

answer in writing, for Parcel 9 and for Parcel 8 alike: an email summary is not ordinance text, and several of the recommendations later in this report read differently depending on it.

The gap that is easiest to fix

⚠️ Lavon has no decibel limit at all

The city's noise rule prohibits loud noise within 500 feet of a home between 8 p.m. and 7 a.m., as a class C misdemeanor. ^[66] There is no number in it. Nothing says how loud is too loud.

State law is no help either: it presumes noise is unreasonable only above **85 decibels**, and only after an officer has already given warning. ^[67] Eighty-five decibels is a chainsaw. It offers no protection at all against a steady mechanical hum at 60.

The city has said it is working on noise and other protections, to be presented once the moratorium is finalized or nearer to it. Lavon still has no decibel limit today.

Plano's noise ordinance is the model worth copying, and the reason is one phrase. Its residential limits are **65 decibels by day and 55 at night, or a set amount above the existing background noise, whichever is lower.** ^[68]

► Why “whichever is lower” is the whole ballgame here

Rural Collin County at two in the morning is very quiet. A flat “65 decibels at the property line” rule would legally permit a hum that is clearly audible in every bedroom on that side of town.

A limit tied to existing background noise is the only kind that actually protects a quiet place.

Plano also measures **where the noise is received** — at the neighbor's house, not at the offender's fence — and states that holding a city permit **is not a defense**.

A limit nobody can measure is decorative. If the city adopts one, it needs a calibrated meter, somebody trained to use it, and a written procedure. That is a budget line, and it is worth asking about.

► And a Dallas-area city has already written all of it down

Mesquite is a home rule city like Lavon. In July 2026 it adopted the most complete data center standards in Texas, and every piece of it is copyable tomorrow. ^[43]

Noise: 65 decibels by day, 60 at night, and 55 at night where the site adjoins homes -- measured at whichever reads higher, the property line or the wall of the nearest house. Plus separate **low-frequency caps at 16, 31.5 and 63 hertz**, which is what catches a hum that ordinary readings miss.

Water: only closed-loop or recycled cooling is allowed. Using city drinking water for open evaporative cooling is prohibited outright. That single sentence resolves the largest uncertainty in this entire report, without anyone having to guess who the tenant might be.

Equipment setbacks of 500 feet from residential -- separate from, and larger than, the 300-foot setback for buildings. Generators and chillers are what make the noise, so they get pushed further away.

► A second Texas city wrote a narrower version

San Angelo adopted data center rules in 2026 that do three things worth copying. They define a data center as a **principal** use separately from a small **accessory** server room, so the definition cannot be argued sideways. They allow data centers only by conditional use, and only in manufacturing districts. And they set a **55 decibel limit at the property line, day and night.** ^[29]

That last number is the thing Lavon does not have and could have. It is not theoretical, it is not from another state, and it is not a draft. It is adopted Texas municipal code.

A cheap, specific thing the city could do about lighting

Texas law sharply limits how cities regulate building materials and appearance. But the same statute contains an exception: a city **that has adopted a resolution stating its intent to become certified as a Dark Sky Community** may regulate outdoor lighting to reduce light pollution. ^[69]

That is a council resolution. It costs nothing, it is not aimed at any particular project, and it unlocks authority the city does not otherwise have over a 24-hour facility's lighting. It is the most concrete item in this report.

► And a second blank the city is invited to fill in

The fire code Lavon has adopted says outdoor storage of flammable liquid tanks is prohibited inside the limits *established by law as the limits of districts in which such storage is prohibited* -- and then, in brackets, **[JURISDICTION TO SPECIFY]**.

The adopted code has a **literal blank where Lavon may draw a map**, and as far as I can tell the city has never drawn one. ^[51]

Worth adding that the zoning already requires these uses to happen entirely inside a building, so an outdoor tank farm is not on the table here regardless. But the blank is real, filling it in is free, and it is far easier to do before somebody applies than after.

What other Texas towns have actually done

Since July 2025, more than 100 local data center ordinances have been considered by Texas cities. ^[70] A sample of what they landed on:

Place	When	What they adopted
San Marcos	June 2026	Voted 4-3 to make data centers ineligible anywhere in the city. The first outright ban in Texas.
Forney	April 2026	Light industrial districts only, special permit required, and a 1,000-foot buffer from homes.
Mesquite	July 2026	The most complete Texas set: 55 dBA at night next to homes, low-frequency caps, 500-foot equipment setbacks, and closed-loop cooling required.
El Paso	July 2026	Adopted a policy framework by resolution recommending 300-foot buffers and no local incentives. Policy, not codified zoning yet.
Lewisville	June 2026	Special permit and two public hearings for any new data center.
Hill County	May 2026	Adopted a one-year pause, then rescinded it weeks later after a developer sued for over \$100 million.

That last row is not a footnote. It is the risk of acting without a solid legal footing, and it is why the questions at the end of this part matter more than any opinion I could offer.

The sentence worth remembering

► Leverage exists only while somebody still needs something from the city

Once a use is allowed by right and only routine approvals remain, the city has nothing left to trade. That is the honest structural problem with these 79 acres.

But large projects almost always come back for something discretionary: a utility service agreement, help with road or water line costs, an easement, a tax abatement. ^[71] **That is the moment.** Whatever the city wants — noise limits tighter than the ordinance, a written commitment to sealed cooling, money set aside for tear-down, deeper buffers — is bought there, or not at all.

One thing to be blunt about: a tear-down bond is something the city has to **buy** with an incentive. It very likely cannot simply impose one on a project that already has its zoning.

There is one thing the city can do today, in public, at no cost, without touching the existing zoning. State law says a city cannot grant a tax abatement unless it has first adopted written guidelines, and those guidelines can require anything lawful. ^[72] Amending them to require noise performance, sealed cooling and decommissioning security as a precondition for any abatement is a decision entirely within the council's hands.

Ten questions worth asking in an open meeting

These are the ones where the answer actually changes something, and where a lawyer rather than a resident should be answering.

- Has **any** application been filed for these 79 acres — plat, site plan, building permit, or a water or sewer service agreement — and on what date?
- What exactly does the nine-year clause freeze? Does it reach a citywide nuisance ordinance, a lighting ordinance, the fire code?
- Can the city adopt a citywide noise ordinance, enforced as a nuisance rather than as a zoning rule, and apply it here?
- Can this council bind future councils for nine years on health and safety?
- Would a Dark Sky intent resolution give the city lighting authority it does not have now?
- Does Lavon have an ordinance that expires permits on projects where no progress is made?
- Are the city's tax abatement guidelines current, and can they be amended now?
- Is a data center even eligible for the state's school tax program? Has the school district been approached?
- Does Lavon take part in the coalition of cities that argues at the state utility commission about who pays for power lines?
- **What discretionary approvals does this project still need from the city?** That list is the entire negotiating position.

9

Recommendations

Questions worth putting on the record

If you only go to one meeting, or write one email, these are the questions that get the most useful answers. They are written to be asked out loud, plainly, without accusation. In my experience that is also what gets them answered.

For the city

- Has anything been filed for this land, and when?
- What would it take for Lavon to have an actual decibel limit, and what would enforcing one cost?
- What did the city ask for, and get, in December 2024 when this zoning was approved?
- If a buyer appears, what approvals would they still need from the council?
- How does a resident who **supports** a project make that known? Opposition organizes and shows up. Support usually does not, and officials notice the difference.

For a developer or operator, if one ever appears

- How many megawatts, and what cooling design? Will you put the cooling design in writing as a condition?
- What is the sound level at the property line, measured at what distance, and will you accept a nighttime limit tied to background noise?
- How many permanent jobs, and how many of those are your employees rather than contractors?
- How many backup generators, and how many hours a year will they run for testing?
- What happens to this building when the equipment inside it is obsolete?

For the school district

About 65 cents of every property tax dollar here goes to Community ISD, and the state program that can limit school taxes is negotiated between a company, the district and the Governor's office — with no seat for the city. If the tax question is what you care about, the school board is a room worth being in.

A closing note

I started this because I wanted to know what was actually allowed on that land, and I could not find anyone who had read the whole list. I still do not know whether a data center is going to be built there. Nobody does, including the city, which has not received an application for one.

What I am fairly confident of is this. The traffic worry is misplaced. The jobs promise is smaller than it sounds. The water question depends entirely on one design choice that somebody should get in writing. The electricity question is real and is mostly decided in Austin, not here. And the most useful thing this town could do — regardless of what ever gets built on those 79 acres — is adopt a noise limit with an actual number in it.

If you think I got something wrong, I would genuinely like to know. Every number in here has a source at the back, which means every number in here can be checked.

APPENDIX

Every use, word for word

These are the complete lists from the zoning ordinance, copied as written. A dagger means the use needs a conditional use permit, which requires two public hearings. Everything without one is allowed by right. I have checked these against the signed ordinance line by line. ^[1]

Land Use Parcel 9 — the business park side (43 uses)

This is the parcel with the industrial possibilities, and the one most of this report is about.

Alcohol: mixed beverage sales (on-premises consumption)	Medical Office
Alcohol: wine and malt beverage sales (on-premises consumption)	Medical or Scientific Laboratory †
Alcohol: mixed beverage package store (on- and/or off-premises consumption) †	Municipal Uses
Alcohol: wine and malt beverage package store (on- and/or off-premises consumption) †	Open Space
Alcohol: manufacturing and distribution (on- and/or off-premises consumption) †	Packing of Parts and Materials Previously Manufactured
Alcohol: brewpub (on- and/or off-premises consumption) †	Parts Assembly, Materials Sorting Previously Manufactured

Animal-related Medical, Grooming or Boarding	Personal Services
Auto, Tool or Equipment Rental †	Pharmacy
Business Service and Sales	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
Commercial Cleaning or Laundry Plant †	Professional Service and Sales
Data Center	Public Parks and Playgrounds
Federal, State or City Owned or Controlled Facilities	Public Recreational Facilities
Hospital	Restaurant
Information Data Processing	Retail Sales
Information Distribution, Publication, Production	Storage of Flammable Liquids and Materials †
Information Telecommunication, Sellers	Studios: Photo, Music, Art, Health, Etc.
Insurance	Technical Service and Sales
Light Manufacturing Clean	Trade Contractor Office and Dispatch
Manufacturing - Appliance, Instrument, Controller	Truck Repairs and Service †
Manufacturing - Device, Parts, Vehicles	Warehousing and Distribution Facilities †
Manufacturing - Die, Tooling, Equipment, Machinery †	Wholesale Enterprises without Materials Storage and Distribution
Materials Bending, Cutting, Machining, Molding, Welding †	

Land Use Parcel 8 — the retail and community side (53 uses)

Softer in character. Data center appears on this list too, and it is the only use exempt from the 30,000 square foot building size cap that applies here.

Amenity Center	Financial Institution
Amusement Establishment	Franchise-holding Facilities and Utilities
Automobile Fueling Station †	Golf Course
Automobile Service Establishment †	Home and Residence Services
Bakery/Confectionary Retail Establishment	Hotel
Bed and Breakfast †	Insurance
Building Material Sales	Medical and State Licensed Health Services
Business Service and Sales	Merchandise Rental
Car Wash †	Municipal Uses
Church or Place of Worship	Nursery, Garden, Landscape Materials Sales
Commercial Greenhouse or Nursery	Nursing Home or Assisted Living Facility

Commercial Recreational Use	Outdoor or Drive-Thru Sales or Service
Community Swimming Pool	Open Space Preserves
Country Club	Personal Services
Data Center	Pet Grooming and Care Services †
Day Care and Education Facility (Privately-owned)	Pharmacy
Dog Park †	Private Clubs and Organizations (indoor) †
Dry-cleaning Retail Establishment	Professional Service and Sales
Educational Facility (Public)	Public Parks and Playgrounds
Alcohol: mixed beverage sales (on-premises consumption)	Public Recreational Facilities
Alcohol: wine and malt beverage sales (on-premises consumption)	Real Estate Services
Alcohol: mixed beverage package store (on- and/or off-premises consumption) †	Restaurant
Alcohol: wine and malt beverage package store (on- and/or off-premises consumption) †	Retail Sales
Alcohol: manufacturing and distribution (on- and/or off-premises consumption) †	Technical Service and Sales
Alcohol: brewpub (on- and/or off-premises consumption) †	Vehicle Parking Garage
Exercise and Sports Establishment	Veterinarian Service, Animal Clinic †
Federal, State or City Owned or Controlled Facilities	

† Conditional use. Requires a public hearing at Planning and Zoning, then another at City Council, before it can be built.

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