INDEPENDENT CASE STUDY

Louisa County, Virginia

A Data Center Case Study

LOUISA

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CASE STUDY: LOUISA COUNTY

The First Overlay, the Amazon Retreat, and the $17 Billion Bet

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ABSTRACT

Louisa County, Virginia invented the instrument that the rest of central Virginia is now copying, and then walked away from its central feature before the first imitator finished drafting. This case study documents the full arc: the April 2023 adoption of Virginia's first Technology Overlay District, a pre-entitlement ordinance that made data centers a by-right use across roughly 6,400 acres of a rural county; the $11 billion Amazon Web Services commitment that followed within five months; the August 2024 correction that shrank the district and converted every use in it to a conditional use permit; the July 2025 withdrawal of AWS's third-campus application under organized resident resistance, the only hyperscaler retreat documented anywhere in this series; and the June 2025 sale of the county-built Shannon Hill Regional Business Park to EdgeCore Digital Infrastructure, which announced a $17 billion, 1.1-gigawatt campus on the site in June 2025 and, as Engage Louisa reported on January 12, 2026, had not yet put a shovel in the ground.

The study finds that the overlay instrument explains less than its imitators assume. The same ordinance produced a hyperscaler that retreated from one fight and a developer that committed $17 billion, because the outcomes were decided by variables the instrument does not control: whether a project faced a veto point, which constituency lived nearby, and when in the county's learning curve the application arrived. The two AWS campuses that proceeded without a single public hearing on their land-use approval were approved under the district's original by-right design. The campus that died was the first to need a permit under the corrected design. Goochland County copied the original; New Kent County's draft, as of June 2026, replaced by-right approval with an administrative conditional use permit that, as county staff proposed it, carried no project-level public hearing, and its Board of Supervisors stopped that draft on July 13, 2026 (Part Three). The litigation now pending in Goochland is, in substance, an argument about a design choice Louisa abandoned in August 2024.

Louisa is also the only county in this series that hosts a nuclear station, a hyperscaler retreat, and a gigawatt-scale commitment simultaneously. The North Anna Power Station supplies roughly 17 percent of Virginia's electricity from the county's northern edge, Dominion and Amazon signed a memorandum of understanding in October 2024 to explore small modular reactor development at the site, and the SCC has approved $17.099 million of SMR project development costs for recovery on ratepayer bills in the rate year that began September 1, 2025, slightly less than the $17.2 million Dominion requested. The evidence is organized for an interdisciplinary research audience, with findings mapped to five research frameworks throughout and consolidated in Part Eleven. This case study is built almost entirely on the

primary record: board packets, minutes, executed agreements, deeds, permits, and regulatory orders pulled directly from public repositories. Part Twelve maps that record, where each document lives, and the short list of items that remain non-public.

PURPOSE, SCOPE, AND METHOD

This case study documents the arc of data center development in Louisa County, Virginia, from the county's first discussion of a technology district in February 2023 through the contested water-discharge hearings of June 2026. It is the origin point of the ordinance lineage this series has been tracing backward from Goochland: Louisa adopted Virginia's first Technology Overlay District, Goochland copied it, and New Kent, as of June 2026, was drafting its own on Goochland's lead, until its board stopped work on the draft on July 13, 2026 (Part Three). The series has cited Louisa repeatedly in passing, the TOD noise standards in the Hanover study, the Shannon Hill sale in the Henrico study's regional context. This report makes the county a subject.

The primary intended readers are researchers studying the energy and social implications of data center expansion in the U.S. South, an interdisciplinary body of work spanning ethnographic and institutional analysis, environmental and distributional justice, energy geography, utility finance, and energy labor studies.[1] This document refers to these research frameworks by type of work. The institutional behavior framework gets the cleanest natural experiment in the portfolio: one instrument, two opposite outcomes, and a county negotiating SMR siting with the same utility that runs its nuclear plant. The utility finance framework gets the sale-versus-lease question at Shannon Hill, the rate posture, and the first county where generation siting and load siting are the same negotiation. The distributional justice framework gets the class geography of Louisa's opposition, which is worth stating plainly and is stated plainly in Part Four. The energy geography framework gets the origin and diffusion of the overlay as Virginia's pre-entitlement technology. The energy, labor, and infrastructure framework gets the water ledger of Part Seven and the thin permanent employment beneath an eleven-figure capital number.

A note on method. This study is built entirely from public sources: the codified county ordinance, county and gubernatorial press releases, Dominion Energy regulatory filings, NRC licensing records, DEQ permit notices, U.S. Census Bureau estimates, and sustained local coverage, principally Engage Louisa, the Substack newsletter of record for Louisa County government, The Central Virginian, Richmond BizSense, Virginia Mercury, Cardinal News's statewide peers, and the trade press. Engage Louisa deserves a methodological flag of its own: it is the newspaper of record for Louisa County government in everything but name, and several figures in this study, notably the tiers of the executed AWS incentive agreement, still rest on its reporting because the underlying contract has never been posted. Nearly everything else has been run to the primary document: the board's CivicClerk packet and minutes

archive, the county DocumentCenter, the SCC docket, DEQ permit notices, the county's GIS and assessment parcel records, and certified election returns. Claims that still rest on a single secondary source are flagged with an asterisk in the text and consolidated in Part Twelve. No interviews were conducted. Developments from June 12 through October 24, 2026 carry their dates in the text; a sentence without a later date speaks as of June 12, 2026. The companion report, What Virginia Is Spending, What Virginia Is Getting (v5.3), covers the statewide fiscal picture.[2] This document is about what happens when a rural county of about 38,000 people at the 2020 census invents the most aggressive pre-entitlement instrument in Virginia, gets exactly what the instrument was designed to attract, and then spends two years deciding how much of its own invention it can live with.

Prior series documents, including the Hanover case study (v2.0, endnote 30), cite the Louisa TOD as section 86-455 of the county code. That citation is wrong. The Technology Overlay District is codified at sections 86-330 through 86-334 of the Louisa County Code (86-335 is reserved); section 86-455 governs corner lots and double frontage lots in the Industrial district.[3] The 65/60 dBA noise standards cited in the series are correct; the section number is not. This report uses the correct sections throughout.

PART ONE: THE INSTRUMENT

Two Months from Concept to Code

Virginia's first Technology Overlay District went from board direction to adopted ordinance in eight weeks. On Monday, February 6, 2023, the Louisa County Board of Supervisors directed staff to work with Jackson District Supervisor Toni Williams on making the county competitive for technology-sector investment.[4] Staff produced a draft overlay ordinance and map within the month. The Planning Commission held its public hearing on March 9, 2023,[4] and recommended that the district's noise limits match what each property's underlying zoning allows; the board instead set 65 dBA by day and 60 by night.[5] On Monday, April 3, 2023, the board adopted the Technology Overlay District as an attachment to Ordinance 2023-6 on a 6-1 vote, Cuckoo District Supervisor Willie Gentry dissenting. A companion amendment to the county noise ordinance, adding the TOD's 65/60 dBA limits to Chapter 51, passed by the same margin the same night; Gentry was the lone vote against both; on the noise amendment, Engage Louisa reported, his vote suggested he would like to see lower limits.[5]

Nine residents spoke at the public hearings, most opposed or concerned. The Lake Anna Civic Association objected to the speed itself: first draft to adoption in roughly two months, for an ordinance that would pre-entitle industrial campuses across ten square miles of a rural county.[5] The objection did not slow anything in 2023. It reads differently now, because the speed of adoption is precisely what the plaintiffs in Goochland County's overlay litigation are arguing about three years later, and because Louisa's own board walked parts of the ordinance back in 2024 and, in January 2026, directed its planning commission to consider removing more, a rollback that had stalled by June.

What the Ordinance Does

The TOD is a pre-entitlement instrument. Rather than waiting for a developer to assemble land and apply for a rezoning, the board selected specific assemblages in advance, mapped them into an overlay, and attached development rights and performance standards to the map. Under section 86-331, a TOD campus requires a minimum of 125 contiguous acres and proximity to electric transmission of 115 kilovolts or more, with adequate water, sewer, and road capacity. Total developable TOD acreage is capped at one percent of county land, 3,266 acres, a ceiling Chairman Duane Adams proposed in parallel to the county's three percent cap on utility-scale solar.[3] The overlay sits on top of existing zoning; underlying by-right uses survive, and TOD rules supersede on conflict. Boundaries are created and amended only by board ordinance.

As adopted in 2023, the district's defining feature was what it removed: any project-level public process. Data centers, technology research and development, capital-intensive advanced manufacturing, technical schools, and major utility services were by-right uses inside the overlay. A qualifying project needed administrative site plan approval and nothing else. No rezoning, no conditional use permit, no public hearing, no board vote. Both AWS campuses now under construction in the county were approved this way; in the board and Planning Commission records this study read, neither campus's land-use approval appeared on a public meeting agenda as a question.[5][6]

The performance standards, codified at section 86-332, were the trade for the entitlement. Noise is capped at 65 dBA daytime and 60 dBA nighttime, enforceable through the county noise ordinance; the figures sit between Louisa's baseline residential limits (65/55) and its industrial limits (75/65), and they are the standards Hanover's stricter 57/52 ordinance was measured against earlier in this series.[3][7] Buffers run 200 feet against residential parcels, 300 feet against agricultural land, 150 feet along primary roads. Building height is capped at 80 feet. Lighting must be dark-sky compliant, with a maximum of 0.50 foot-candle at the property line. Each contiguous parcel group must keep 20 percent open space.[3]

The adoption paperwork carries a defect worth recording, because it prefigures the litigation that later found the instrument's imitator. The ordinance text attached to the board's April 3 packet, footed as drafted February 7 and revised March 10 after the Planning Commission meeting, still showed 70/65 dBA noise limits and a uniform 200-foot buffer for residential and agricultural neighbors alike.[8] The version the county posts as approved carries an editing date of April 6, three days after the vote, and shows the 65/60 standard and a 300-foot agricultural buffer.[9] The minutes record the 6-1 roll call, Gentry against, Jones, Williams, Adams, Barlow, Barnes, and Purcell in favor, and no floor amendment to either figure.[8] Contemporaneous press reported a 200-foot buffer and the 65/60 limits.[10] The noise numbers are at least partly explained by the companion Chapter 51 vote the same night; the agricultural buffer is not, and nothing public documents when it entered the text. Goochland's overlay is in court on exactly this class of defect, an adopted version that differed from the advertised one. Louisa's version of the problem has sat unexamined in its own DocumentCenter for three years.

The Map

The adopted district covered roughly 6,400 acres across approximately 100 parcels in six contiguous groups, all in central and eastern Louisa, most near 230 kV or 500 kV transmission:[5][11]

1. Roughly 150 to 200 acres at Kentucky Springs Road and Haley Drive, directly adjacent to the North Anna Power Station. Now AWS's Lake Anna Technology Campus.

2. The Cooke Industrial Rail Park, roughly 1,200 acres between the towns of Louisa and Mineral, mostly owned by the county's Industrial Development Authority and partly leased for a 118 MW solar project.

3. The Fisher Chewning tract, roughly 1,400 acres north of the Northeast Creek Reservoir, owned by the family of a former county supervisor until AWS bought it in January 2026.

4. Roughly 1,444 acres south of Route 33 near the reservoir. Now AWS's North Creek Technology Campus.

5. The Shannon Hill Regional Business Park, 697 county-assembled acres at Interstate 64 exit 143. Removed from the district in August 2024; sold to EdgeCore in June 2025.

6. A Gum Spring assemblage of roughly 1,300 to 1,500 acres near the I-64 Gum Spring exit, crossed by a 500 kV line. Removed in August 2024.

Staff deliberately excluded the Green Springs National Historic Landmark District, the Trevilian Station battlefield, agricultural and forestal districts, the towns, and the Zion Crossroads and Ferncliff growth areas.[11] The exclusions matter for the distributional reading: the district was drawn around transmission lines and away from the county's protected landscapes, which means it was drawn toward the unprotected ones. The people who live along Kentucky Springs Road and Mt. Airy Road got an industrial overlay; Green Springs got a buffer. That is what pre-entitlement by map looks like at parcel scale, and no one who lived inside the six assemblages had any procedural recourse once the map was adopted, because the entitlement attached to the land before any project existed to oppose.

PART TWO: THE COMMITMENT

Eleven Billion Dollars in Five Months

The overlay worked faster than anyone publicly predicted. On Wednesday, August 30, 2023, 149 days after adoption, the county announced that Amazon Web Services would invest $11 billion by 2040 to build two data center campuses inside the TOD: the Lake Anna Technology Campus beside the nuclear station and the North Creek Technology Campus near the Northeast Creek Reservoir.[6] County Administrator Christian Goodwin estimated at least $25 million per year in local tax revenue at full buildout, before incentives. The Virginia Economic Development Partnership's president supplied the statewide frame, welcoming AWS's expansion "into rural Virginia."[6] The Louisa announcement was a tranche of the $35 billion statewide AWS commitment Governor Youngkin had announced that January, the package that produced the state's $140 million Cloud Computing Cluster Infrastructure Grant Fund and an extended sales-tax exemption runway.[12]

The speed deserves emphasis because it is the instrument's actual sales pitch. AWS did not buy land and then ask Louisa for permission; the permission predated the purchase. The site contractor filed water-quality permits for the Lake Anna campus on September 1, 2023, two days after the announcement.[13]

The Terms

The board papered the relationship across the autumn of 2023, in public session, unanimously, and fast.

On Tuesday, September 5, 2023, after a closed session held under Virginia FOIA's legal-counsel and public-contract exemptions (Va. Code § 2.2-3711(A)(7), (8) and (29)), the board approved a performance agreement with Amazon Data Services, 7-0, "subject to future amendment thereto about incentive package details"; the packet contained a one-page summary, not the agreement.[14] The executed Economic Development Local Performance Agreement followed on November 28, 2023, and that document has never been posted; its terms are public only through Engage Louisa's reporting.* [15] As reported, the structure returns a share of incremental tax revenue to AWS through the Industrial Development Authority as infrastructure grants between 2026 and 2046: 15 percent of revenue on investment between $150 million and $11 billion, 20 percent from $11 billion to $20 billion, 25 percent from $20 billion to $30 billion, and 30 percent above that, with performance grants of 17 to 20 percent continuing from 2047 to 2051. If AWS misses the $11 billion threshold by July 1, 2040, the grant obligation ends.* [15] The structure is worth pausing on: the rebate percentage rises as the investment grows, which means the county wrote an agreement whose marginal generosity increases with exactly the scale residents

would later organize against. The state layer is documented: on Monday, October 20, 2025, the board approved, 7-0, the tri-party agreement under which AWS may draw up to $140 million from the Commonwealth's cloud-computing grant fund and Louisa must certify, by October 1, 2040, a local match of at least twice whatever the state pays.[16]

On Monday, September 18, 2023, after a public hearing, the board voted 7-0 to add an alternative personal property rate for data center equipment qualifying under Virginia Code § 58.1-3506(A)(43): $1.25 per $100 of assessed value, against the general business rate of $1.90, with a depreciation schedule adopted by the Commissioner of the Revenue assessing equipment at 50 percent of original cost in year one, 35 in year two, 20 in year three, 10 in year four, and 5 percent thereafter.[17] The economic development director told the board the package was in line with localities competing for AWS investment, and that AWS typically replaces equipment every five to six years.[17] Part Eight does the arithmetic on what the rate and the schedule jointly produce.

On Monday, December 18, 2023, the board approved the water and sewer service agreements, 7-0, and the executed drafts in the packet carry the watermark "AMAZON CONFIDENTIAL."[18] The terms: the Lake Anna campus gets permanent cooling water at an instantaneous peak of 1,370 gallons per minute with delivery due January 20, 2027, against an AWS infrastructure reimbursement of $24.78 million; North Creek gets 3,522 gallons per minute of cooling water plus small potable and sewer connections with delivery due July 23, 2026, against reimbursements totaling roughly $9.9 million; AWS pays $7.71 per thousand gallons of raw water.[18] The often-cited 7 million gallons per day is real but is a design specification, the combined peak-day demand in the agreements' engineering exhibit, while staff's presentation that night put average daily use at full buildout at 630,000 gallons against the reservoir's 3.2 million gallon safe yield.[18] The agreements contain no average-use cap; the binding numbers are the peak flows. In November 2024 the board had before it a partnership to build a nearly $88 million infrastructure project to serve the campuses, a raw water pumping station, raw water pipelines and two new wastewater pump stations, with a public hearing on the budget allocation to cover it.[19]

The Buildout

Clark Construction, the same general contractor building Iron Mountain's Henrico campus, broke ground at Lake Anna in August 2024 after a July 17 pre-construction meeting.[20] The campus plan: seven standard data centers totaling more than 1.7 million square feet, two specialty buildings, an administration building, two substations, and a minimum of 420 MW.[13] The North Creek site plan, filed in

November 2024, covers roughly 374 developed acres of the 1,444-acre assemblage with ten buildings of about 382,000 square feet each, approximately 3.8 million square feet; by mid-2025 AWS had filed site plans for 17 shells across the county and may build as many as 36.[13][21][22] Local reporting puts North Creek's potential demand as high as 3 gigawatts with up to ten substations, figures no county or company document confirms.* [22] At the Lake Anna Summit on April 20, 2026, AWS's data center cluster leader said the first Lake Anna building had reached substantial completion and been "turned over for operations," with auxiliary buildings finished; no energization or in-service confirmation appears in any regulatory record, and the campus runs on well water until the county's raw water line arrives in January 2027.* [23]

Through all of this, in the record this study read to June 12, 2026, the two campuses generated concern but no organized confrontation over their land-use approval, for a structural reason the Henrico study documented in its by-right chapter: there was no vote to attend, no hearing to pack, no application to oppose. The entitlement had been settled in April 2023 at the map level, before either campus had a name.

One neighbor's lawsuit sits beside that record. Austin Newsom, who lives across the road from Amazon's construction site at North Creek, and his business, Central VA Marine, sued Amazon Data Services for private nuisance in Louisa County Circuit Court in August 2025; the case was moved to the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Virginia, where on July 10, 2026 Judge Jasmine H. Yoon allowed the nuisance claim to proceed and dismissed a separate claim for injunctive relief as an independent cause of action.[24] The ruling did not decide liability. A hearing on Newsom's request for a preliminary injunction was set for August 19, 2026; its outcome was not found in the sources cited here, as of October 24, 2026.[24]

PART THREE: THE FIRST CORRECTION

August 2024: The County Edits Its Invention

Sixteen months after adopting the TOD, Louisa cut it by a third and removed its central feature. On Monday, August 5, 2024, the board unanimously adopted Ordinance 2024-11, which did two things. It removed the Shannon Hill and Gum Spring assemblages from the district, roughly 2,000 acres. And it converted every TOD use from by-right to conditional use permit: section 86-333 was retitled "Permitted uses with the issuance of a conditional use permit," which means that since August 2024 nothing in Louisa's overlay proceeds without a public hearing and a board vote.[3][25]

The geography of the cut is its own story. The Planning Commission had recommended removing three assemblages, Gum Spring, Shannon Hill, and the 1,400-acre Fisher Chewning tract. At the board's July 1, 2024 hearing, Eric Purcell, the former supervisor whose family company owns Fisher Chewning, told the board "we would love to remain in the TOD," a supervisor moved to approve the cut with Fisher Chewning excepted, questions about five-year land-use rollback taxes surfaced, and the board tabled the whole matter.[26] The August ordinance that emerged removed the other two assemblages and left Fisher Chewning in. Nine months later AWS proposed its third campus on that tract; seventeen months later AWS owned it. The parcel that stayed in the district at its owners' request is the one the county has spent 2026 trying and failing to take back out.[26][27]

The two halves of the correction have different logics. The Shannon Hill removal was housekeeping: the park's 2019 rezoning proffers already allowed data centers by right, so the overlay added nothing there except a second set of standards.[28] The Gum Spring removal and the CUP conversion were policy. Residents had spent a year pressing the board about rural character and water, and the board responded by reinstalling the procedural step the ordinance had been designed to eliminate. The AWS campuses, already in progress, were grandfathered.

The correction is the hinge of this case study. The county that invented by-right pre-entitlement in Virginia kept the overlay, the map, and the standards, and abandoned the by-right core after a single deal cycle. Every theory of what happened next has to account for the fact that Louisa's own experience with its instrument, measured by its own amendments, was: too much, too fast, never again without a hearing.

What the Imitators Took

The lineage runs through the details. Goochland County adopted its Technology Overlay District on November 6, 2025, on a 4-1 vote: roughly 4,400 acres along

Route 288, with data centers by-right in the main district. Goochland's original July 2025 draft used Louisa's noise standard verbatim, 65 dBA day and 60 dBA night at the property line, and Louisa's general architecture of overlay-plus-by-right-entitlement. Public pressure pushed the final version stricter on noise (55 dBA/65 dBC at the property line, day and night) and setbacks, but the by-right core survived into the adopted ordinance.[29] Four residents sued in December 2025 over notice defects, and that litigation, covered in the Goochland report of this series, is at bottom about the feature Louisa had already repealed: entitlement without a project-level hearing, adopted at speed.[30]

New Kent County drafted its own district in early 2026, with the Goochland lawsuit on the record. Its draft district along Route 33 used the same 65/60 noise limits as Louisa's ordinance and 200-foot setbacks and buffers from residential and agricultural zones, covered 1,800 gross acres, which county staff put at 1.3 percent of county land, and replaced by-right approval with an administrative conditional use permit under which, as Richmond BizSense reported staff's proposal, data center projects inside an approved district would not go to a public hearing.[31] The instrument is diffusing, and the diffusion is legible at the level of individual decibel figures and buffer distances. What is not diffusing evenly is the lesson Louisa's board drew in August 2024. Goochland copied the 2023 ordinance; New Kent's draft, as its staff described it, used a permit with no project-level hearing, the step Louisa's 2024 amendment restored. The energy geography framework should treat the three counties as one diffusion event with a fork in it, and the Goochland courtroom as the cost of picking the wrong branch.

The New Kent branch above is the record at June 12, 2026. On Monday, July 13, 2026, New Kent's Board of Supervisors voted that the draft 1,800-acre district in the Route 33 corridor "should not proceed in its current form," on a motion describing it as "no longer the policy direction of the board," and directed staff and the Planning Commission to discontinue work on it; staff were directed to draft a data center ordinance with strict performance standards.[32] On Tuesday, September 29, 2026, at a work session, the board rejected Resolution R-41-26, which would have initiated a zoning ordinance amendment imposing a two-year moratorium on data centers: polled, Supervisors Evelyn, Moyer and Pearson voted nay and Supervisors Stiers and Stewart aye. The same session reviewed draft data center performance standards, and the county's community development director said public hearings on the ordinance should wait until February at the earliest.[33]

PART FOUR: THE RETREAT

The Third Campus

In May 2025, AWS filed the first application ever tested against Louisa's corrected ordinance: conditional use permit CUP2025-05, with a companion subdivision application and six special exceptions, for a third campus of up to 7.2 million square feet and seven substations on nine Fisher Chewning parcels totaling 1,353.19 acres north of the Northeast Creek Reservoir.[34][35] The applicant of record was Amazon Data Services; the agent was Charles W. Payne Jr. of Hirschler. The proposal was about 30 percent larger than the roughly 5.5 million square feet planned across both campuses already under construction, about 1.7 million at Lake Anna and 3.8 million at North Creek. The land belonged to Fisher Chewning LC, the Purcell family entity that had asked to stay in the TOD the previous summer, a detail that did not escape public notice.[34]

The site mattered as much as the scale. The Northeast Creek Reservoir is the drinking water supply for central Louisa and the source the county had just committed to the two existing AWS campuses. The third campus would have wrapped industrial construction around the reservoir's northern watershed while seven new substations and a 230 kV line crossing organized the skyline. For the first time since the overlay was adopted, there was an application, a hearing, and therefore a fight to have.

The Resistance

The opposition assembled in about six weeks, and its composition is worth recording precisely because this series has no other example of a hyperscaler losing one.

A neighborhood meeting on June 11, 2025 produced the concerns AWS would later cite in its withdrawal letter. At a town hall at Louisa County High School on June 26, around twenty speakers pressed the board, and Mineral District Supervisor Duane Adams, the board chair, broke first: "I don't support this project," he said, calling access off Kennon Road dangerous and saying he shared residents' concerns about traffic and the water supply.[28][36] In late June, Savannah Walker, a Louisa native who works in the data center industry, launched the Louisa County Technology Discussions Facebook group, which reached roughly 500 members within weeks and became the organizing hub, alongside a group called Concerned Residents of Louisa County, an online petition, yard signs, and bumper stickers.[37] The Town of Mineral's council committed on July 14 to a formal statement of opposition.[38] On July 24, about a hundred people met at Mineral Baptist Church at an event co-hosted by the two resident groups, with an organizer from the Piedmont Environmental Council, one of the organizations that formed the statewide Virginia Data Center

Reform Coalition, sharing the stage with Walker and a Culpeper data center industry veteran.[39]

The objections were concrete: runoff into the drinking water reservoir, cooling draw, traffic on two-lane roads, noise, light, seven substations, and proximity to schools. One resident's formulation traveled furthest: "Please don't Loudoun Louisa. Please don't Prince William Louisa."[37] The two sentences compress the series' diffusion argument into nine words; Nora Wynkoop, a Patrick Henry District resident, said them to the Board of Supervisors.

Opposition in Louisa had a class geography. The third-campus fight was led from central Louisa, the Mineral and reservoir constituencies, with technical credibility supplied by industry-employed locals and organizational reach supplied by a regional conservation group whose strength is in the Piedmont's estate and second-home counties. The Lake Anna constituency, the waterfront property owners and recreational economy around a 13,000-acre reservoir, engaged later and on a different front, the discharge permits of Part Seven. The people who lived closest to the two campuses already under construction, along Kentucky Springs Road and Mt. Airy Road, never got a process to organize around at all. Opposition in Louisa won where there was a veto point and a constituency with time, skills, and property stakes, which is to say the resistance map records who had standing and leverage. Who bears the buildout is a different map.

July 23, 2025

AWS folded before the application reached a vote. On Wednesday, July 23, 2025, Payne wrote the county's deputy planning director withdrawing CUP2025-05: "We have heard the community and appreciate the desire for more robust input in any future projects that may be brought forward in the county." The letter, a scan of which sits on the county's own document server, restates the $11 billion commitment, praises the county's "high standards for responsible siting, buffers, noise limits," and closes by asking the county to return all of AWS's application materials to the law firm.[40] A company that wants its papers back is not planning to refile them. Virginia Mercury's report five days later gave the retreat its statewide frame.[41] Adams claimed the lesson in public: "This proves by this withdrawal, that when citizens get involved, they can have an impact on the local government," urging the county to "stay the course, slow down, pump the brakes."[42]

Precision about what was withdrawn matters, because the series has developer retreats (Tract in Hanover, HHHunt and Diode elsewhere in the regional record) and this is the only hyperscaler among them. AWS withdrew one CUP application for one proposed third campus. It did not withdraw from Louisa. The $11 billion commitment stood, both campuses kept building, and the company kept its name off

the door of the fight: the withdrawal took the form of a letter from counsel, with no press release. A developer retreat usually means a project died. This one meant a company with an eleven-figure local commitment declined to spend political capital on a marginal expansion in a county where it would have faced a public vote. The institutional behavior framework should resist romanticizing it: AWS retreated from a hearing, not from Louisa.

The Coda That Complicates the Victory

Nearly eleven months of subsequent record, to June 12, 2026, say the retreat was provisional. The November 2025 election ratified the board's late conversion first: Adams, the chair who had flipped on the third campus, survived a challenge framed around his data center record by 196 certified votes, 1,431 to 1,235.[43] Then, in early January 2026, AWS quietly bought the withdrawn site anyway. Three deeds, recorded in Deed Book 2058 and reported in mid-January, total $72,452,434 for roughly 1,925 acres: $54,013,753 for the Fisher Chewning assemblage, $17,529,321 for the adjacent 456-acre Mine and Hemmer tract, and $909,360 for about 24 acres along Route 22 and Shortmans Road.[44][45] The land had a combined assessed value near $3.7 million. An AWS spokesperson told the local press the company acquired the property "to help support water infrastructure needs in the area," noting the county's reservoir-to-North Anna waterline crosses the land. It has filed no application.[44] The board responded on January 20, 2026 with a unanimous vote directing the Planning Commission to consider removing Fisher Chewning and the Cooke Rail Park from the TOD entirely, roughly 2,600 acres, with Adams declaring himself opposed to any data center construction there.[27] The commission has now pulled the public hearing twice, each time after a closed session held under the legal-counsel exemption of Virginia FOIA: 7-0 on February 12, 2026, then 5-2 on April 9 over the dissents of commissioners Goodwin and Kersey, with no public explanation either time.[46][47] As of June 12, 2026, the rollback is stalled, the tracts remain in the district, and the largest landowner positioned to benefit from that fact is the company that retreated. Whatever the July 2025 withdrawal was, it was not an ending.

Data Center Dynamics, in an undated article published after the June 2025 third-campus application, reported a further filing: a joint permit application by Amazon Data Services for a Desper Creek Technology Campus on about 140.2 acres, with drawings suggesting eight data centers and a substation. The application itself was not read for this case study, and its filing date is not established.[21]

PART FIVE: THE $17 BILLION BET

The Park the County Built

Shannon Hill is the other half of the natural experiment, and it begins seven years before EdgeCore. In 2018 the county set out to assemble a regional business park of as much as 1,600 acres at I-64 exit 143, scaled back to roughly 700 acres after neighbor opposition. It bought the 697 acres for $2.6 million, a purchase the county dates to 2018 and the trade press to early 2019,* and rezoned them in 2019 with proffers that allowed data centers by right, and then spent years building the utilities a tenant would need: a $5.6 million elevated water tank and booster station contracted in 2023, and a $27.58 million contract considered in December 2024 for seven miles of water main and seven miles of sewer force main connecting the park to Ferncliff. The county's investment in readying the park passed $30 million, including $13.6 million in state grant funding and some $17 million in debt issued in 2024.[28][48] Through all of it the park sat empty. As late as December 2024, the county acknowledged it had not brought a single business to the site.[48]

That is the posture in which the overlay's imitators should read Shannon Hill: a county that spent six years and over $30 million in public and grant money speculatively building a pad for an industry that had not yet asked for it. The August 2024 removal of the park from the TOD changed nothing operationally, since the 2019 proffers already carried the entitlement. The pre-entitlement was in the proffers before it was in the overlay; the overlay generalized what Shannon Hill piloted.

The Sale

In June 2025 the bet paid, on terms the county chose. The Industrial Development Authority sold the park to EDI Louisa 1, LLC, EdgeCore's Virginia entity, for $42 million, roughly $60,000 an acre. The county's parcel records show the sale closing on Tuesday, June 24, 2025, the same day the county announced it, with the IDA as grantor of record.[49][50] EdgeCore's release followed on June 25: a $17 billion-plus investment in a 3.9 million square foot campus supporting more than 1.1 gigawatts, served not by Dominion distribution but by Rappahannock Electric Cooperative and its affiliate Hyperscale Energy, cooled by what the release called a "close-looped air-cooled system" with a water usage effectiveness below 0.01 liters per kilowatt-hour. The governor supplied a quote; the announcement pushed his administration's claimed capital investment total past $120 billion.[51] EdgeCore called Louisa its sixth active market.[51]

The figures have already drifted. EdgeCore's current site materials describe 3.1 million square feet in six buildings and "closed loop chilled water systems" rather

than air cooling, while keeping the 1.1+ GW and the WUE claim.[52] The drift is small but diagnostic: eleven months after announcement, the campus's basic published parameters are still moving, which is what "announced, not contracted" looks like in practice.

The Terms, and the Silence

The board approved a performance agreement with EDI Louisa 1, LLC on Monday, December 1, 2025, 7-0, and this one is in the packet in full. The county returns, through the IDA and subject to annual appropriation, 15 percent of the real and tangible personal property taxes paid by EdgeCore, its affiliates, and its tenants, first payment in 2027 and last in 2041, until payments reach a hard cap of $15 million, whichever comes first.[53] Two features distinguish it from the AWS deal: there is no tax-equalization clause, and because EdgeCore is a landlord whose announced $17 billion is overwhelmingly real property, the grant base is structurally different from a hyperscaler's equipment-heavy investment.[53] Against the AWS agreement's escalating 15-to-30 percent tiers and quarter-century runway, EdgeCore's terms are modest, which itself measures how the county's negotiating posture hardened between September 2023 and December 2025.

What the public record does not contain is as notable. EdgeCore has never disclosed expected daily water consumption, and no independent estimate of construction, humidification, or makeup demand exists.* [54] The record likewise contains no substation plan, interconnection timeline, tenant, or construction start date. As Engage Louisa reported on January 12, 2026, EdgeCore "hasn't put a shovel in the ground at the Shannon Hill Regional Business Park"; the more than $2.6 million in data center building permit fees the county had received in FY2025 and the first half of FY2026 came from AWS, by the finance director's account.[55] The gating items are visible enough: the campus's water depends on the James River Water Project, now expected complete in late 2027, and its power depends on a cooperative that has never served a load of this class, through arrangements that remain undisclosed.[56] A possible third dependency arrived uninvited: one candidate corridor for the proposed Valley Link 765 kV transmission line enters Louisa at the Shannon Hill park itself, and the county has allocated $250,000 to fight the line.[57] That corridor sentence states the record at June 12, 2026. On September 30, 2026 the Virginia Mercury reported a Louisa route variation that would parallel an existing transmission line through the county's technology overlay district, and Chairman Duane Adams's account that the county had put aside the $250,000 for legal fees to fight the project at the SCC; the variation is not mapped against Shannon Hill in the sources cited here. Valley Link's project page, read October 24, 2026, still lists its State Corporation Commission filing under the third quarter of

2026 and states no filing or case number; the SCC's case index is not among the sources cited here.[58]

Sale Versus Lease

The utility finance framework gets the sharpest question here, because the county had a live alternative in its own portfolio: the IDA leases ground at the Cooke Industrial Rail Park to a solar operator, and it sold Shannon Hill fee simple. The sale recovered the land cost sixteen times over and roughly covered the combined land-plus-utilities outlay, much of which had been grant-funded. It also surrendered the county's only ownership stake in the corridor it had spent six years preparing, in exchange for a one-time payment roughly equal to one year of the county's projected data center revenue (Part Eight). No public record of a sale-versus-lease debate exists; the IDA negotiated privately and announced a closed transaction.[49]

The proceeds tell their own story about fiscal posture. The June 2025 announcement said the surplus would go primarily to early debt repayment. By April 2026 the board was poised, as Engage Louisa reported ahead of its April 6 meeting, to appropriate roughly $33 million of it to pay cash for upgrades at the Ferncliff Water Treatment Plant near Route 250 ($11.5 million) and the New Bridge Wastewater Treatment Plant near Lake Anna ($21.5 million), instead of using it to chip away at a $153 million existing debt load.[59] Selling a built asset to a data center developer in order to cash-fund the water infrastructure that the data center economy requires is a circular flow the framework should price: the county is recycling its land patrimony into the utility base of the industry that bought it.

PART SIX: THE NUCLEAR ADJACENCY

The Plant That Was Already There

No other county in this series hosts a nuclear station. North Anna Power Station's two Westinghouse pressurized water reactors, online in 1978 and 1980, deliver a combined 1,892 megawatts, roughly 17 percent of Virginia's electricity, from the county's northern edge.[60] The NRC issued subsequent license renewals on August 28, 2024, clearing both units to operate into 2058 and 2060, an 80-year life.[61] Lake Anna, the 13,000-acre reservoir built in 1972 to cool the plant, doubles as the county's recreational economy: 17 miles of boating, fishing, and waterfront property spanning three counties, with a civic association dating to 1992 and a documented history of friction with the plant over drought-year lake levels.[62]

AWS's Lake Anna Technology Campus sits directly beside the station. The adjacency is not decorative. The campus's minimum 420 MW would absorb close to half the output of one reactor, and the site was mapped into the TOD precisely because the transmission was already there. Louisa is the first county in the series where generation siting and load siting are the same negotiation, conducted with the same utility, which also happens to be the county's largest legacy taxpayer at roughly $11 million a year.[63]

The SMR Thread

Dominion issued a request for proposals to SMR vendors on July 10, 2024, announced at North Anna with the governor ceremonially signing SB 454, the statute that lets the company recover SMR development costs from ratepayers through 2029, capped at $1.40 per month on a typical residential bill.[64] On Wednesday, October 16, 2024, Dominion and Amazon announced a memorandum of understanding to explore SMR development at North Anna, exploration explicitly, with no reactor design named and no dollar figure stated in the announcement, and an Amazon-side framing of "at least 300 MW" of capacity. The Louisa board publicly applauded.[65]

The current status is thinner than the announcement coverage implied. No technology has been selected; the only documented Dominion tie to a specific design is 2018 seed funding for GE Hitachi's BWRX-300. No SMR-specific application of any kind had been docketed at the NRC for North Anna as of June 2026. What Dominion does hold is legacy licensing: an Early Site Permit granted in 2007 and a combined license for a third large unit issued in 2017 and shelved four months later, the North Anna 3 file that consumed over $600 million in its day. On the company's May 1, 2026 earnings call, the CEO cited the existing ESP and three gating principles, first-of-a-kind risk, overrun risk, and balance sheet protection, which is

the vocabulary of a company keeping an option alive rather than exercising it.[66] Dominion's 2024 Integrated Resource Plan assigns SMRs five units and 1,340 MW beginning in the mid-2030s; the 2025 update keeps SMRs at the 2035 horizon across its portfolios.[67]

Two facts anchor the thread against the speculation. First, the money is already flowing: the SCC's final order in case PUR-2024-00205, issued July 29, 2025, approved Rider SMR with a revenue requirement of $17.099 million for the rate year beginning September 1, 2025, out of a $24.8 million Phase I scope; at the $17.2 million Dominion had requested, the estimated increase on a typical monthly residential bill was $0.29, comfortably under the statute's $1.40 cap.[68] Dominion's own investor language brackets the ambition: the 2025 IRP says partnerships with "third parties and high load customers… may provide avenues for earlier deployment of SMRs" than its portfolios reflect, while the CEO told analysts in February 2026, "[W]e do not have capital in the plan, this five-year plan, for an SMR."[67][69] Second, the county has already booked the hope: staff revenue projections include roughly $12 million a year by the late 2030s if an SMR is built.* [15] A county whose fiscal plan now includes a speculative reactor, negotiated between its largest taxpayer and its largest new investor, with the feasibility bill on every ratepayer in the service territory, is the institutional behavior framework's exhibit for how thoroughly the load question has colonized the generation question. Note the structure: the customer is Amazon, the developer is Dominion, the regulator that pre-approved cost recovery is the SCC, and the county whose land and lake host all of it has no formal role in the transaction at all.

PART SEVEN: THE WATER LEDGER

Small Systems, Large Promises

Louisa County's water infrastructure was built for a county of small towns. The Zion Crossroads well field has run near its roughly 587,000 gallon-per-day limit, with two additional wells adding about 204,000. The Northeast Creek Reservoir, the central system, has a safe yield of 3.2 million gallons per day against current draws of roughly 300,000 average and 500,000 peak.[70] The 2020 Census counted 37,596 residents; the 2025 estimates put the county near 42,400 to 42,900, among the fastest growth rates in Virginia.[71]

Onto this base the county has loaded: water service agreements for two AWS campuses with a combined peak-day design demand near 7 million gallons per day and a projected average draw of 630,000, about a fifth of the reservoir's safe yield;* [18] a nearly $88 million county-built conveyance program, including raw water pipelines, with raw water delivery to the Lake Anna campus due January 20, 2027;[18][19] and a gigawatt-class campus at Shannon Hill whose water demand is undisclosed and whose supply depends on the James River Water Project. That project, a joint Louisa-Fluvanna intake and pipeline conceived in 2003, carries its own history in this series' register: the original intake site at Point of Fork was Rassawek, the historic Monacan capital, and the authority relocated the intake a mile upstream in March 2022 after a national preservation fight. Ground broke in August 2024 on a project now reported at $56 million, with Louisa floating roughly $60 million in bonds for its broader buildout including the Ferncliff treatment plant, which sits finished and idle awaiting river water. Completion has slipped from mid-2026 to late 2027.[72]

The Discharge Front

The supply side organized the 2023 agreements; the discharge side is organizing the 2026 politics. The North Creek campus holds VPDES permit VA0093301, effective through January 31, 2031, allowing up to 460,000 gallons per day of discharge into Northeast Creek, which feeds toward Lake Anna; it drew no site-specific comments and issued without a hearing.[73][74] The Lake Anna campus's draft permit, VA0093319, is the fight: up to 280,000 gallons per day of treated cooling water into Sedges Creek, a daily maximum temperature of 89.6 degrees, and no PFAS testing requirement, though DEQ retains a reopener. More than 75 comments in the first comment period (November 13 to December 15, 2025) forced a public hearing, held March 19, 2026 at Louisa County Middle School inside a second comment period that ran to April 3.[74] On Tuesday, June 9, 2026, three days before this report's evidence snapshot, DEQ returned to the middle school for a

follow-up session limited to prior commenters: dozens attended, four qualified to speak under the format, and lakefront residents objected that the agency's answers leaned on source-water data rather than operational discharge data. The permit decision was then pending.[75] DEQ has since approved it. The Board of Supervisors' minutes of Monday, August 3, 2026 record Supervisor McCotter discussing DEQ's approval of a VPDES permit for AWS to discharge non-contact cooling water from the Lake Anna Technology Campus into Sedges Creek, and his satisfaction that the permit included "groundwater monitoring wells around the site" and "funding to address any well failures determined to have been caused by the data center."[76] Lake Anna Life, the one outlet read for the issued terms, reports 280,000 gallons per day, a daily maximum of 89.6 degrees Fahrenheit (32 Celsius), a term of August 1, 2026 through July 31, 2031, a map and table of residential wells within one mile due within 90 days of issuance, and financial assurance of $25,000 per residential well plus $500,000 to remediate impacts on existing wells; The Central Virginian also reports the August 1 effective date.[76] The issued permit, its number and DEQ's fact sheet are not among the sources cited here, so whether the draft's PFAS and reopener terms carried into the issued permit is not established here.

This is where the Lake Anna constituency entered the story in force, and the timing is the tell. The lake community, organized around a civic association that has run harmful algal bloom monitoring since the advisories began in 2018, largely sat out the third-campus land fight in central Louisa. It mobilized when the industry's effluent pointed at the waterfront. The county, for its part, has already priced the constituency in: the draft plan for allocating data center revenue earmarks 4.4 percent, about $1.6 million a year, for algal bloom mitigation.* [77] The distributional justice framework should hold both facts at once. The most effective opposition constituencies in Louisa are the reservoir neighbors who had a veto point and the lakefront owners with property values to defend, while the corridor that absorbed the by-right campuses had neither, and the county's redistribution plan compensates the lake before it compensates the corridor. Amazon says the Louisa sites will use evaporative cooling about 4 percent of the year. The permits, the makeup chemistry, and the discharge they allow, 460,000 gallons per day authorized at North Creek as of June 12, 2026 and a further 280,000 at Lake Anna authorized from August 1, 2026, for 740,000 combined since that date, measure the distance between that operating-mode claim and the hydrology beneath it.[73]

PART EIGHT: THE FISCAL ARCHITECTURE

The Rate Posture

Louisa's data center equipment rate of $1.25 per $100 sits in the middle of the regional table this series has been assembling: above Henrico's old recruitment rate of $0.40 and Hanover's $0.45, below Henrico's post-reform $2.60 and far below the $3.50 statewide norm.[17][78] The headline rate understates the concession. Run the depreciation schedule: a dollar of AWS equipment is taxed on 50 cents in year one and on a nickel from year five onward, an effective levy of $0.0625 per $100 of original cost on aged equipment. Since the economic development director told the board AWS replaces equipment every five to six years, the schedule's tail rarely binds, but the front of the schedule is the revenue engine, which means Louisa's data center revenue is structurally dependent on refresh cadence, the same dependency the Henrico study documented for that county's housing trust fund. The rate record is fully public, in the September 2023 and April 2026 minutes; the FY27 levies adopted 7-0 on April 27, 2026 confirm $0.72 real estate, $2.07 individual personal property, $1.90 business personal property, and $1.25 data center equipment.[17][79] What is not public is the executed AWS incentive agreement that determines how much of the resulting revenue flows back out.[15]

For that reason Louisa's $1.25-plus-schedule structure resists single-number comparison in any regional rate table.

What the Money Is Doing

The published budget arc: general property tax revenue rose from $84.1 million in FY2024 (actual) to a budgeted $97.1 million in FY2026, and permits, fees and regulatory licenses from $1.33 million in FY2024 to $2.87 million in FY2025 (actuals), the year AWS building permit fees began to arrive; the FY2027 budget adopted on Monday, April 27, 2026 totals $201 million.[55][80] Staff projections, never published with methodology, run from $36.48 million in new annual revenue by FY2031 to more than $50 million a year by the mid-2040s, against an FY2026 operating budget of $174.8 million.* [15][81] The per-building benchmark beneath them, the county's estimate that one data center shell could generate $37.7 million over 15 years, carries the local paper's own caveat that it has "not been independently verified."* [22]

The board has started spending the projection. The FY2027 budget cut the individual personal property rate from $2.43 to $2.07, a 15 percent reduction credited explicitly to data center growth, with Chairman Adams and Supervisor Williams calling it a potential first step to eliminating personal property taxes for individuals over the next few years, and Williams declaring he would wear the cut "like a badge

of honor."[82] A draft revenue allocation plan from June 2025 splits the projected FY2031 increment across capital projects (24.5 percent), roads (17), rural preservation (15), recreation and public safety and judicial facilities (10 combined), water and sewer (9), tax relief (5), and Lake Anna algal bloom mitigation (4.4), among smaller lines.* [77] One supervisor's blunt framing of the politics: a working-class resident who reads that Louisa got $30 million from Amazon while real estate taxes climb is entitled to be angry.[15] The pattern, a rural county converting projected hyperscale revenue into broad-based tax cuts years before the revenue fully materializes and while the largest announced investment has yet to break ground, is the utility finance framework's risk exhibit. Louisa is leveraging its operating budget against AWS's refresh cycle and EdgeCore's intentions, and the fiscal record so far shows the spending decisions running ahead of the receipts. The county's plan, as of April 2026, to pay cash for water and wastewater upgrades from the Shannon Hill proceeds keeps that work off its debt; it does not keep unrealized projections out of rate policy.

The Incentive Stack, Both Directions

What flows back out: the AWS tiered rebates of 15 to 30 percent through 2046 plus the 2047-2051 performance grants;* [15] the EdgeCore 15 percent through 2041 capped at $15 million;[53] the state's $140 million cloud cluster fund, with the county contractually committed to certifying a local match of at least double the state grant by October 2040;[16] and the sales-tax exemption that the companion statewide report prices at the commonwealth level. The county's economic development director has said the staff projections were developed internally "with assistance from the company" and already net out the incentives.[83] The claim may be true. It cannot be tested, because the methodology has never been published and the agreement that defines the rebates has never been posted. A net-revenue assertion whose two inputs are both non-public is an assertion, and the series will treat it as one until the documents surface.

PART NINE: WHAT THE INSTRUMENT EXPLAINS AND WHAT IT DOESN'T

Louisa is the test of whether the overlay instrument does what its imitators assume it does, and the test result is negative in an instructive way.

The instrument's theory is that pre-entitlement plus performance standards equals fast, predictable, low-conflict development. The record: the same district produced two campuses approved without a hearing and built without organized opposition to their land-use approval in the record read to June 12, 2026 (the discharge-permit contest of Part Seven and one neighbor's nuisance suit, noted in Part Two, ran on other fronts); one application withdrawn under resistance strong enough to flip the board chair; a 697-acre park whose buyer committed $17 billion and has built nothing in a year; and a stalled attempt by the county itself to shrink the district a second time. One ordinance, four trajectories. The variables that actually sorted the outcomes are visible in the comparison. Process: the by-right campuses could not be fought because there was nothing to attend; the CUP campus died precisely because the August 2024 correction had restored a veto point. Constituency: the application that failed pointed at a drinking water reservoir and a town; the campuses that proceeded pointed at transmission lines and a nuclear buffer. Timing: AWS's terms were written in the autumn of 2023 by a board in recruitment posture; EdgeCore's were written in December 2025 by a board that had watched a withdrawal, an election, and a land coup, and the terms tightened accordingly.

What the instrument did do is real but narrower than the marketing. It compressed time, moving the political decision from project scale to map scale, which is why $11 billion arrived 149 days after adoption. It standardized the corridor's vocabulary: within three years the 65/60 noise standard went into Louisa's code, Goochland's July 2025 draft and New Kent's draft, though Goochland's adopted ordinance came out stricter on noise and New Kent's board stopped its draft. And it relocated conflict rather than eliminating it: from rezoning hearings to ordinance adoption (Goochland's lawsuit), to discharge permits (the June 2026 DEQ hearing), to land transactions (AWS's January 2026 purchase of the site it had retreated from). The wave the Hanover study tracked outward, Henrico to Hanover to the next ring, did not stop in Louisa. It changed instruments.

The closing observation belongs to the whole series. Louisa got the most favorable version of the bargain available to a rural Virginia county: real revenue ahead of schedule, utility upgrades it planned to fund in cash, a retreat it can cite as proof of citizen power, and a nuclear option that might anchor the next tax base. It also now has a district it is trying and failing to shrink, a $72 million landowner with no application and no obligations, a gigawatt commitment with no shovel, water

infrastructure scheduled to arrive after the loads it serves, and a fiscal plan whose denominator is two companies' private capital cadence. Both readings are true, and the county's next decade will be the arbitration between them.

PART TEN: CHRONOLOGY

Date	Event
1972	North Anna River dammed; Lake Anna created as plant cooling reservoir
1978 / 1980	North Anna Units 1 and 2 online; 1,892 MW combined
2018–2019	County assembles 697-acre Shannon Hill park for $2.6M; Lake Anna algal bloom advisories begin (2018)
2019	Shannon Hill rezoned with proffers allowing data centers by right
Mar 16, 2022	James River Water Authority votes to relocate intake off Rassawek
Feb 6, 2023	Board directs staff to draft technology-sector strategy
Mar 9, 2023	Planning Commission hearing; recommends noise limits matching underlying zoning
Apr 3, 2023	TOD adopted, Ord. 2023-6, 6-1; ~6,400 acres, data centers by-right
Aug 30, 2023	County announces AWS: $11B by 2040, two campuses
Sep 5, 2023	AWS performance agreement approved 7-0, subject to amendment
Sep 18, 2023	Data center equipment rate set at $1.25 + 50/35/20/10/5 schedule, 7-0
Nov 28, 2023	Executed AWS incentive agreement signed; text never posted
Dec 18, 2023	Water/sewer service agreements approved 7-0; 7 MGD combined peak design
Jul 10, 2024	Dominion SMR RFP announced at North Anna; SB 454 ceremony
Aug 2024	Clark Construction breaks ground at Lake Anna campus
Aug 5, 2024	Ord. 2024-11: TOD cut ~2,000 acres; all uses converted to CUP
Aug 14, 2024	James River Water Project groundbreaking
Aug 28, 2024	NRC subsequent license renewal; North Anna licensed to 2058/2060
Oct 16, 2024	Dominion-Amazon SMR memorandum of understanding
Nov 2024	North Creek site plan filed (~3.8M sq ft); nearly $88M infrastructure project before the board
Mid-May 2025	AWS files CUP: third campus, 7.2M sq ft, Fisher Chewning tract

Date	Event
Jun 11 / 26, 2025	Neighborhood meeting; town hall where Chairman Adams declares opposition
Jun 24 / 25, 2025	IDA sells Shannon Hill to EdgeCore, $42M; EdgeCore announces $17B+, 1.1+ GW
Jul 14, 2025	Town of Mineral commits to opposition statement
Jul 23, 2025	AWS withdraws third-campus application by counsel letter
Jul 29, 2025	SCC approves Rider SMR, PUR-2024-00205: $17.099M on ratepayer bills
Aug 2025	Neighbor and his business sue Amazon Data Services for nuisance over North Creek construction; case later moved to federal court
Oct 20, 2025	VEDP cloud-grant local-match agreement approved 7-0
Nov 4, 2025	Elections: all four incumbents win; Adams 1,431–1,235 over a data-center-framed challenge
Dec 1, 2025	EdgeCore performance agreement approved 7-0: 15%, $15M cap, through 2041
Jan 2026	AWS buys 1,925 acres including withdrawn site; three deeds, $72,452,434
Jan 20, 2026	Board directs PC to consider removing Fisher Chewning and Cooke from TOD, 7-0
Feb 12 / Apr 9, 2026	PC pulls rollback hearing twice after closed sessions, 7-0 then 5-2
Mar 19, 2026	DEQ public hearing on Lake Anna draft discharge permit VA0093319
Apr 20, 2026	AWS: first Lake Anna building at substantial completion, turned over for operations
Apr 27, 2026	FY27 budget adopted 7-0, $201M; individual personal property rate cut to $2.07
Jun 9, 2026	Contentious DEQ follow-up session on Lake Anna discharge permit; decision pending
Jun 12, 2026	Evidence snapshot: rollback stalled; EdgeCore unbuilt; no in-service confirmation in any regulatory record
Jul 10, 2026	Federal court lets the neighbor’s nuisance claim against Amazon Data Services proceed
Jul 13, 2026	New Kent board stops work on its draft Route 33 technology overlay district (Part Three)
Aug 1, 2026	DEQ discharge permit for the Lake Anna campus takes effect, as reported; term to July 31, 2031

Date	Event
Sep 29, 2026	New Kent board rejects a two-year data center moratorium, 3-2 (Part Three)

PART ELEVEN: READING GUIDE BY FRAMEWORK

Institutional behavior. The natural experiment of Part Nine: one instrument, opposite outcomes, sorted by veto points, constituencies, and timing rather than by ordinance text. The August 2024 self-correction as institutional learning under pressure, and the imitators' fork (Goochland copying the abandoned design; New Kent's draft using a permit with no project-level hearing) as evidence about how policy actually diffuses, read as it stood on June 12, 2026; New Kent's board stopped work on its draft on July 13, 2026 (Part Three). The SMR triangle of Part Six: a county fiscally planning around a reactor it has no formal role in approving, negotiated between its largest taxpayer and largest investor. The stalled 2026 rollback, two pulled hearings after closed sessions, as the current observation point.

Utility finance. The sale-versus-lease question at Shannon Hill and the recycling of land proceeds into the industry's own utility base (Part Five). The rate-plus-depreciation structure and refresh-cycle dependency (Part Eight). Rider SMR as pre-construction ratepayer financing. The gross-versus-net revenue gap: no consolidated projection subtracting the rebate tiers exists.

Distributional justice. The class geography of Part Four stated plainly: opposition won where standing, skills, and property stakes concentrated; the by-right corridors absorbed the buildout without a process; the revenue plan compensates the lake constituency before the host corridors. The map exclusions of Part One: protected landscapes got buffers, unprotected ones got the overlay. Rassawek in the water ledger as the precedent for whose history moves a pipeline.

Energy geography. The origin story of Virginia's pre-entitlement technology and its diffusion at the level of decibel figures and buffer distances (Parts One and Three). The conversion of conflict across instruments rather than its resolution (Part Nine). Lake Anna as a layered rural geography: cooling reservoir, recreational economy, second-home belt, and now data center discharge basin.

Energy, labor, and infrastructure. The water ledger of Part Seven: peak-day design figures versus average draws, discharge permits versus "minimal water" claims, supply infrastructure arriving after load. The 420 MW minimum at Lake Anna against one reactor's output. Employment: the county's announcements promise "hundreds" of jobs against $11 billion; no Louisa-specific employment census exists in the public record this study read.

PART TWELVE: SOURCE NOTES, FLAGS, AND THE PRIMARY RECORD

Asterisk Flags

Claims marked * in the text rest on a single secondary source or carry an unresolved discrepancy.

1. AWS incentive agreement tiers (15/20/25/30 percent infrastructure grants; 17/20 percent performance grants 2047-2051): Engage Louisa, October 20, 2025, only. The executed agreement of November 28, 2023 has never been posted; the October 2025 VEDP agreement references it as Exhibit A, and the exhibit page in the posted packet is a placeholder.

2. Lake Anna first-building status ("substantial completion... turned over for operations"): AWS's cluster leader at the April 20, 2026 Lake Anna Summit, via a single recap source. No energization or in-service confirmation appears in any regulatory record.

3. County revenue projections ($36.48M FY31; more than $50 million a year by the mid-2040s; roughly $12 million a year from an SMR; the allocation percentages): staff figures via Engage Louisa; methodology never published; the director's statement that they are net of incentives cannot be tested against a non-public agreement.

4. EdgeCore water demand: no figure exists publicly. The WUE claim of below 0.01 L/kWh is the company's, and its published campus parameters drifted between June 2025 and June 2026 (3.9 to 3.1 million square feet; air-cooled to chilled water).

5. CUP2025-05 filing date: reported as mid-May 2025; the application became public in early June; the retrieved public notice is undated.

6. Shannon Hill assembly year: the county's release says 2018; Virginia Business reported the completed $2.6 million purchase in March 2019. The deeds sit in Circuit Court records behind a paid portal, the one class of record this study could not pull free.

7. AWS January 2026 deed dates: prices and deed-book references (DB 2058/272, /295, /328) are from county parcel records; exact recordation dates are not in the free layer.

8. North Creek power demand ("could require up to 3 GW... up to 10 substations"): The Central Virginian, July 30, 2025, only.

9. The $37.7 million-per-building, 15-year revenue benchmark: a county estimate for one data center shell that The Central Virginian itself notes has “not been independently verified.”

10. AWS’s stated purpose for the January 2026 land purchase (“to help support water infrastructure needs in the area”): company statement to Engage Louisa only.

Where the Primary Record Lives

Louisa County’s governing record is more public than its reputation suggests; nearly everything in this study traces to a document anyone can download. Board and Planning Commission packets, minutes, and meeting video live on the county’s CivicClerk portal (louisacova.portal.civicclerk.com), and every file is directly retrievable through the portal’s public API (louisacova.api.civicclerk.com/v1/Meetings/GetMeetingFileStream(fileId=N,plainText=false)). The load-bearing files: the April 3, 2023 TOD adoption packet and minutes (fileIds 1338, 1340; video at event 474); the September 5, 2023 AWS agreement resolution (1520, 1540); the September 18, 2023 tax vote (1539, 1572); the December 18, 2023 executed water and sewer agreements (1645, 1656); the October 20, 2025 VEDP local-match agreement (2131, 2138); the December 1, 2025 EdgeCore agreement in full text (2148, 2176; video at event 1021); the August 5, 2024 amendment video (event 868); the Planning Commission rollback minutes (2237, 2275); and the April 27, 2026 FY27 levy adoption (2258, 2264).

The county DocumentCenter holds the posted “as approved” TOD text (View/9955, the April 6, 2023 edit discussed in Part One), the FY27 budget book (View/12544), and the third-campus neighborhood notice (View/11692). The CUP2025-05 application and the July 23, 2025 withdrawal letter are still live on the county document server (louweb.louisa.org/LCDocs/_CUP/2025-05/). The SCC’s Rider SMR final order is in docket PUR-2024-00205. The discharge permits are traceable as VA0093301 (issued) and VA0093319 (the Lake Anna draft; the number of the permit effective August 1, 2026 is not confirmed in the sources cited here) through EPA’s ECHO database and the Virginia Regulatory Town Hall. Sale dates, prices, grantors, and deed-book references for the EdgeCore and AWS transactions are in the county’s GIS parcel layer and Patriot Properties assessment cards. Election results are certified at the Virginia Department of Elections.

What Remains Non-Public

As of June 12, 2026, five items resisted retrieval. The executed AWS Economic Development Local Performance Agreement of November 28, 2023, the single most consequential fiscal document in the county, is unpublished, and with it the tier schedule rests on press reporting. The Dominion-Amazon SMR memorandum of

understanding has never been released by either party. The Circuit Court deed instruments sit behind Virginia's paid remote-access system, leaving exact January 2026 recordation dates and the 2018-2019 Shannon Hill assembly deeds unconfirmed. The Planning Commission's two closed sessions on the TOD rollback are lawfully exempt, and the minutes record only the legal-counsel citation. And DEQ's decision on the Lake Anna discharge permit was then pending; DEQ has since issued the permit, effective August 1, 2026 (Part Seven), though the issued permit's text and number had not been retrieved as of October 24, 2026; the other four items were not re-checked after June 12, 2026.

ENDNOTES

[1] The research framework categories used in this case study are the author's analytic categories, applied by type of work.

[2] Tommy N. Turner, What Virginia Is Spending, What Virginia Is Getting: The Commonwealth Data Center Reference, v5.3, August 2026, 10.5281/zenodo.20679292. Companion case studies, cited by concept DOI: Henrico County, 10.5281/zenodo.20671031; Prince William County, 10.5281/zenodo.20673498; Hanover County, 10.5281/zenodo.20672048; Orange County and the Town of Orange, 10.5281/zenodo.20672496; Goochland County, 10.5281/zenodo.20673467; Chesterfield County, 10.5281/zenodo.20672436; The Google-CFS Power Purchase Agreement, 10.5281/zenodo.20679935.

[3] Louisa County Code, Ch. 86, Art. II, Div. 6, §§ 86-330–86-334 (86-335 reserved) (Ord. 2023-6, Apr. 3, 2023; Ord. 2024-11, Aug. 5, 2024), via Municode, codified through Ord. 2026-6 (Mar. 16, 2026). § 86-455 (corner lots, IND district) confirmed unrelated. https://library.municode.com/va/louisa_county/codes/code_of_ordinances

[4] Engage Louisa, "This week in county government," Mar. 6, 2023. https://tammypurcell.substack.com/p/this-week-in-county-government-after-632

[5] Engage Louisa, Apr. 10, 2023 (adoption, votes, hearing testimony, LACA speed objection). https://tammypurcell.substack.com/p/adams-williams-propose-five-percent

[6] Louisa County press release, "Amazon Web Services announces plan to invest $11 billion in Louisa County by 2040," Aug. 30, 2023. https://www.louisacounty.gov/m/newsflash/Home/Detail/363?arc=2319

[7] Turner, Hanover Case Study v2.0, Part Two and endnote 30 (section number corrected herein).

[8] Louisa County BOS, Apr. 3, 2023: agenda packet, attachment 9.6.c, "LDR 2023-01 Amendment — Section 86-330 Technology Overlay District" (drafted Feb. 7, revised Mar. 10, reformatted Mar. 28, 2023), CivicClerk fileId 1338; minutes (roll call, no floor amendment), fileId 1340; meeting video, CivicClerk event 474. File-stream URLs follow the pattern in Part Twelve.

[9] Louisa County DocumentCenter, "Amendments to Chapter 86 LDR — TOD," marked "BOS Approved 040323," file edit date Apr. 6, 2023. https://www.louisacounty.gov/DocumentCenter/View/9955

[10] Isaac Parrish, "County OKs tech overlay districts," The Central Virginian, Apr. 2023, via Internet Archive capture of Apr. 8, 2023.

https://web.archive.org/web/20230408170147/https://www.thecentralvirginian.com/news/county-oks-tech-overlay-districts/article_235d31e6-d3bd-11ed-a1fe-af8f2a30cab1.html

[11] Louisa County, “Technology Overlay District (TOD)” explainer. https://www.louisacounty.gov/3244/Technology-Overlay-District-TOD

[12] Office of the Governor, AWS $35 billion announcement, Jan. 2023. https://www.governor.virginia.gov/newsroom/news-releases/2023/january/name-991808-en.html

[13] Data Center Dynamics, “Amazon files for 3.8 million sq ft data center campus in Louisa County, Virginia,” Nov. 5, 2024 (the Northeast Creek filing: 374 acres, ten 382,000 sq ft buildings, three substations; recaps the Lake Anna campus filed in September 2023: up to seven buildings, 1.7 million sq ft, two substations). https://www.datacenterdynamics.com/en/news/amazon-files-for-38-million-sq-ft-data-center-campus-in-louisa-county-virginia/; Lake Anna campus details via baxtel.com/data-center/amazon-lake-anna-tech-campus

[14] Louisa County BOS, minutes, Sept. 5, 2023 (closed session under Va. Code § 2.2-3711(A)(7), (8), (29); 7-0 approval “subject to future amendment”), CivicClerk fileId 1540; packet summary, fileId 1520.

[15] Engage Louisa, “BOS preview: board to talk data center revenue,” Oct. 20, 2025 (agreement tiers, Barnes quote). https://tammypurcell.substack.com/p/bos-preview-board-to-talk-data-center. The executed EDLPA is dated November 28, 2023 per the Oct. 20, 2025 board minutes; it is referenced as Exhibit A to the VEDP local performance agreement but omitted from every posted packet.

[16] Local Cloud Computing Performance Agreement (Louisa County / VEDP / Amazon Data Services), BOS packet, Oct. 20, 2025, CivicClerk fileId 2131 ($140M maximum grant; local match “at least twice” the state amount; final local match report due Oct. 1, 2040); approved 7-0 per minutes, fileId 2138.

[17] Louisa County Board of Supervisors, minutes, Sept. 18, 2023 (7-0; Va. Code § 58.1-3506(A)(43); rate and schedule verbatim), CivicClerk fileId 1572; packet fileId 1539. Wade statements per Engage Louisa, Sept. 25, 2023. https://tammypurcell.substack.com/p/this-week-in-county-government-bos-f59; The Central Virginian, “BOS approves tax break for AWS.” https://www.thecentralvirginian.com/news/bos-approves-tax-break-for-aws/article_d843f14a-57d3-11ee-abe8-5308ae4428c2.html

[18] Executed water and sewer service agreements (IAD550 Lake Anna Tech; IAD557 North East Creek Tech), Louisa County BOS packet, Dec. 18, 2023,

CivicClerk fileId 1645 (peak flows, delivery dates, reimbursements, rates; Exhibit 1 combined peak-day demand ~7 MGD); minutes, fileId 1656 (7-0; staff average-at-buildout 0.63 MGD against 3.2 MGD safe yield). Context: Engage Louisa, Jul. 22, 2024. https://tammypurcell.substack.com/p/aws-preparing-to-start-work-at-lake

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[21] Data Center Dynamics, "AWS seeks permit for another data center campus in Louisa County," undated, after June 2025 (reports the Desper Creek Technology Campus joint permit application, "around 140.2 acres," "eight data centers could be developed" with a substation; recaps the September 2023 and November 2024 filings). https://www.datacenterdynamics.com/en/news/aws-seeks-permit-for-another-data-center-campus-in-louisa-county-virginia/

[22] "Louisa residents 'keep pushing' as data center discussion intensifies," The Central Virginian, Jul. 30, 2025. https://www.thecentralvirginian.com/news/louisa-residents-keep-pushing-as-data-center-discussion-intensifies/article_b9e78680-92ee-4968-bee8-b149dd010844.html

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[27] Engage Louisa, "Supes direct PC to review TOD," Jan. 26, 2026. https://tammypurcell.substack.com/p/supes-direct-pc-to-review-tod-consider

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13”). https://richmondbizsense.com/2026/07/15/new-kent-supervisors-strike-down-tech-district-plan-rezone-340-acres-for-potential-business-park/; WTVR CBS 6, “Supervisors address data center concerns in New Kent County,” Jul. 15, 2026. https://www.wtvr.com/news/local-news/new-kent-data-center-concerns-july-15-2026. New Kent’s minutes of July 13, 2026 are not among the sources cited.

[33] New Kent County Board of Supervisors, Work Session, September 29, 2026: Action Agenda, item 3.e (Resolution R-41-26; members polled, Evelyn, Moyer and Pearson nay, Stiers and Stewart aye; “The motion failed.”), items 3.f and 3.g (the 30-day citizen review item “was pulled from the agenda”); agenda packet of the same date (text of R-41-26); meeting video, newkentcountyva YouTube channel, auto-generated transcript at about 1:07:50 (Community Development Director Joshua Airaghi on holding public hearings “until February at the earliest”).

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This case study draws on the codified Louisa County ordinance, county and state press releases, Dominion Energy regulatory filings, NRC licensing records, Virginia DEQ permit proceedings, census data, and sustained local coverage from 2023 through June 12, 2026, with items dated in the text carried to October 24, 2026. It supersedes v1.0 (June 2026). It is a companion to What Virginia Is Spending, What Virginia Is Getting: The Commonwealth Data Center Reference (v5.3, August 2026).