INDEPENDENT CASE STUDY

Prince William County, Virginia

A Data Center Case Study

Governance Capture, the Revolving Door, and the Democratic Correction

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Governance Capture, the Revolving Door, and the Democratic Correction

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Companion case studies in this series:

- Case Study: Henrico County — How Two Neighborhoods Forced Virginia's Second-Largest Data Center Jurisdiction to Change Course
- Case Study: Hanover County — Mountain Road, Tract, and the Search for Leverage
- Case Study: Orange County and the Town of Orange — Convergence at Two Scales: One Industry, Two Governments, and the Entitlement Neither Can Reach

Version note: This version carries the case forward from the July 5, 2026 evidence snapshot to November 24, 2026 for the items dated in the text: the board's adoption of the overlay district amendment, DPA2026-00006, on September 22, 2026, the June 9 rescission and re-initiation of its text, and the county's October 16 guidance on site plans accepted before the December 21 close; the July 7 refusal to initiate the Sanders Lane comprehensive plan amendment; the September 14 dismissal of the landowners' federal suit against GW Acquisition; the Morrisville to Wishing Star certificate case through the Hearing Examiner's rulings of October and November 2026 and Dominion's sworn testimony on the load behind the line; the county's Tax Year 2025 data center revenue report; the noise ordinance's enforcement report of October 2026; the Four Seasons-area, Six Towers and Quantico Ridge applications as the county record shows them; the Vint Hill substation denial; and a later YES PAC receipt. Part Twelve lists the open documentary items. Research framework references follow the series role-label convention. Endnotes are numbered by first appearance.

Disclosure: The author serves on the advisory board of an Alfred P. Sloan Foundation-funded study at Emory University on data centers and the Southern energy buildout. The study had no role in this case study.

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More of the author's data center research, grouped by topic: tommynturner.com/data-centers

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ABSTRACT

On March 31, 2026, the Court of Appeals of Virginia affirmed the judgment that had voided the Prince William Digital Gateway: three rezonings covering 1,760 acres of the county's Rural Crescent, approved by a lame-duck board at the end of a twenty-seven-hour hearing in December 2023, declared void ab initio because the county failed to follow its own public notice requirements. Two weeks later the Board of County Supervisors voted unanimously to stop defending the approvals it had once granted, after spending roughly $1.7 million in public money on the defense. Two weeks after that, Compass Datacenters walked away from the project. QTS, the remaining developer, filed a petition with the Supreme Court of Virginia three hours before the deadline, then withdrew it on July 2, 2026, announcing "a responsible wind-down." The largest data center proposal in American history is dead, and no court ever reached its merits.

This case study documents how the county got there, and why the route ran through a primary election, a general election, and three levels of the Virginia court system. Prince William is the case in this series where the governance itself was the failure point. A sitting supervisor signed a contract to sell his own land to one of the project's developers ten days before joining the application. The board chair held a disclosed position of $50,001 to $250,000 in the parent company of the other developer while the project moved through approval. The supervisor resigned under a conflict-of-interest ruling and was working for a data center lobbying firm within three months. The chair lost her primary to a political newcomer who ran against the project, then used the lame-duck period to push the rezonings through anyway. The voters corrected what the disclosure system could not. The courts then voided what the correction could not reach.

The study also documents what the correction did not end. After the new board was seated, a developer whose project a sitting supervisor had voted to approve made a $100,000 contribution to that supervisor's political action committee, described by the Prince William Times as likely the largest from an individual donor to any supervisor in county history, followed by a second $100,000 from another data center landowner. The lobbying firm that hired the resigned supervisor filed a comprehensive plan amendment for a 1,940-acre assemblage that would rival the Digital Gateway, and now employs a sitting School Board member; on July 7, 2026, the board declined to initiate that amendment. The county whose flagship project the courts voided collected $465.9 million in data center tax revenue in tax year 2025, up 59 percent in a year, raised its equipment rate to $4.50 per $100 in April 2026, above Loudoun's $4.15, and adopted a budget that cut the residential tax rate, built on a proposal that projected roughly $550 million in data center revenue.

Whether democratic correction is durable or merely cyclical is the sharpest question the institutional behavior framework confronts anywhere in this series. Prince William supplies evidence on both sides, and this study does not resolve what the record leaves unresolved.

PURPOSE, SCOPE, AND METHOD

This case study documents the arc of data center development in Prince William County, Virginia, from the county's designation of data centers as a targeted industry in 1995 through the judicial invalidation of the Digital Gateway rezonings, the appellate affirmance of March 31, 2026, and the project's termination on July 2, 2026, when the last developer withdrew its petition to the Supreme Court of Virginia and the zoning litigation ended. The companion Henrico County case study documents a regulatory reversal driven by community organizing. The companion Hanover County case study documents a county that refused its flagship project before entitling it. This case documents something more corrosive: the capture of the governance itself, and the cost of correcting it.

The case study is written to serve three audiences. First, 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] Following project convention, this document refers to these research frameworks by type of work rather than by individual researcher. Second, Virginia localities currently weighing data center proposals that want a documented record of what governance failure and its correction look like in a jurisdiction where both have occurred. Third, citizens and journalists who need the timeline, the names, and the public record assembled in one place.

The companion reports cover the statewide fiscal picture (What Virginia Is Spending, What Virginia Is Getting, v5.3), the Henrico regulatory reversal, the Hanover refusal, and the Orange County prospective case.[2] This document is about what happens when the people deciding whether to industrialize a rural corridor have financial entanglements with the companies asking them to do it, and what it costs a county to correct that failure. Other corrective mechanisms existed on paper. The ballot box was the one that worked, and even the ballot box needed the courts to finish the job.

A note on method. This study is built entirely from public sources: court opinions and filings, county ordinances and budget documents, Statements of Economic Interests, Commonwealth's Attorney opinions, campaign finance records maintained by the Virginia Public Access Project, General Assembly records, and sustained named-outlet reporting, principally the Prince William Times, InsideNoVa, Potomac Local News, Bristow Beat, DCist/WAMU, WTOP, the Washington Post, Virginia Business, the Virginia Mercury, and Cardinal News. Direct quotations from officials are reproduced from hearing video transcripts or from the cited coverage, and the distinction between an official's verbatim words and a reporter's paraphrase is

maintained throughout. No interviews were conducted. Claims that rest on secondary sources rather than primary documents are flagged with an asterisk and consolidated in Part Twelve with the primary source identified for verification. Where the record is incomplete, the case study says so. Where the record is damaging, the case study lets it sit.

PART ONE: THE GEOGRAPHY AND THE STAKES

Prince William County occupies 348 square miles in Northern Virginia, thirty miles southwest of the District of Columbia. Its population, approximately 482,000 as of the 2020 Census, makes it the second-largest county in Virginia by population and one of the wealthiest jurisdictions in the country by median household income.[3] The county's eastern half is suburban and commercial, threaded with commuter corridors feeding into Washington. Its western half is something else.

The Rural Crescent

In 1998, the Prince William Board of County Supervisors adopted a comprehensive plan designation that drew a line across the county's midsection. Everything west of that line, roughly 100,000 acres, was designated the Rural Crescent: a planning boundary intended to limit urban sprawl, protect agricultural land and forest, and preserve the environmental resources that defined western Prince William's character.[4] The Rural Crescent was a political commitment, reaffirmed across multiple comprehensive plan cycles by boards of both parties, that the western end of the county would not become what the eastern end had become.

The geography it protected is specific. Conway-Robinson State Forest, 444 acres of hardwood and pine managed by the Virginia Department of Forestry, sits within the crescent.[5] Manassas National Battlefield Park, administered by the National Park Service, preserves the ground where two major Civil War engagements were fought in 1861 and 1862; the park's western boundary runs along the Pageland Lane corridor that would later become the Digital Gateway site, with the existing Dominion transmission right-of-way passing through the Brawner Farm section of the park itself.[6] The Bull Run Mountains, the easternmost range of the Blue Ridge, form the western horizon. The Occoquan Reservoir, which supplies drinking water to roughly 800,000 people in Fairfax County and eastern Prince William, draws on watersheds that originate in the crescent's drainage basin, and the Digital Gateway site sits in the headwaters of Catharpin Creek, a Bull Run tributary feeding that system.[7]

The Rural Crescent was, in other words, not empty land waiting for a use. It was land that already had one.

The Eastern Corridor and the Overlay District

Data centers arrived in Prince William County's eastern half decades before the Digital Gateway controversy. The county first identified data centers as a "Targeted Industry" in 1995, a designation amended in 1999, 2014, and 2019 as cloud computing reshaped the market.[8] The modern regulatory framework took shape

in 2016, when the Board of Supervisors adopted Ordinance 16-21, creating the Data Center Opportunity Zone Overlay District. The overlay covered approximately 10,000 acres of existing industrial land in the county's eastern corridor, where high-voltage transmission lines and fiber-optic infrastructure could support server farms without requiring new utility corridors.[9]

Within the overlay, data centers were permitted by right. If a developer's site plan met the zoning code, the planning director was required to approve it. There was no board vote, no public hearing, no formal mechanism for residents to weigh in. The framework was designed for speed: developers got certainty, the county got assessed value, and the approval process stayed administrative rather than political. For years it worked without visible friction, because the facilities were sited in industrial zones far from residential neighborhoods and because the tax revenue, even at the low $1.25 per $100 equipment rate the county maintained from roughly 2001 through 2019, arrived quietly on the budget line without requiring anyone to explain what the buildings actually did.[10] The board that inherited the Digital Gateway's wreckage moved against that framework in March 2026. On September 22, 2026, it adopted an amendment that closed the overlay to expansion, sent new data centers outside it to a special use permit, and left by-right permissions with the parcels that qualify to remain inside; Part Nine documents it.

By 2019, approximately 72 percent of the county's industrially zoned land sat within the overlay.[11] Prince William had positioned itself as the next frontier for Northern Virginia's data center market, the natural overflow valve for Loudoun County, where the world's largest concentration of data centers was running out of land and power capacity. The BAE Urban Economics market study, commissioned by the county and published in 2021, confirmed the positioning: Prince William had the lowest personal property tax rate for data centers in Northern Virginia, demand was "practically unlimited," and the primary constraint on future growth was land availability, not market appetite.[12]

The question was where the land would come from. The overlay's eastern acreage was filling. The demand projections were accelerating. And the Rural Crescent, with its Dominion transmission corridors and its proximity to existing fiber routes, was sitting right there.

The Pageland Lane Corridor

Pageland Lane runs through the Gainesville District in western Prince William County, a stretch of two-lane road lined with five-acre residential lots, horse fences, and the kind of tree cover that registers as rural even though Gainesville's median household income of $137,048 places it among the wealthiest districts in the region.[13] The corridor sits between Conway-Robinson State Forest and the

boundary of Manassas National Battlefield Park. It is, by any conventional planning metric, the last place a county would site more than 20 million square feet of industrial development.

On July 20, 2021, the Board of County Supervisors initiated a comprehensive plan amendment process for the corridor, Resolution 21-445, formally designating what would become the Prince William Digital Gateway.[14] The study area covered approximately 2,139 acres. The proposal, assembled from multiple developer applications led by QTS Data Centers and Compass Datacenters, envisioned the conversion of rural and agricultural land into a technology corridor that would rival Loudoun County's entire installed data center base in a single project. Three rezoning applications followed, and the precise mapping matters because press accounts have repeatedly confused it. As the Court of Appeals would later memorialize from the record: REZ2022-00036, the Compass rezoning, applicant H&H Capital Acquisitions, LLC, covering 103 parcels and approximately 884 acres for up to 11.5 million square feet; REZ2022-00032, Digital Gateway North, applicant GW Acquisition Co. I, LLC, a QTS entity, approximately 534 acres for 7 million square feet; and REZ2022-00033, Digital Gateway South, applicant GW Acquisition Co., LLC, also QTS, approximately 342 acres for 3.7 million square feet. The three rezonings together covered approximately 1,760 acres; the larger 2,139-acre figure refers to the CPA study corridor.[15]

The scale requires context. Loudoun County hosts the world's largest concentration of data centers, built across decades of incremental development along the Dulles corridor. The Digital Gateway proposed to match a substantial share of that footprint in a single comprehensive plan amendment on land that had been designated for rural preservation since 1998. A May 2022 companion study by BAE Urban Economics, the Targeted Industry Land Need Analysis, projected that data centers would account for 64 percent of new space demand in Prince William County through 2041 and that the highest-demand scenario would require 8,666 acres, "considerably exceeding" the county's 5,316 acres of buildout capacity within existing industrial zones.[16] The Digital Gateway was, in effect, the county's answer to that capacity gap: take the acres from the Rural Crescent.

The Infrastructure Demands

Data center scale is measured in megawatts of power draw, not square feet. The Coalition to Protect Prince William County, the citizen opposition group that became the primary organized resistance to the project, estimated that the total potential data center buildout across the county, comprising over 86 million square feet of approved and proposed capacity, would require 26.5 gigawatts of power.[17] For reference: the entire city of New York uses approximately 5.5 gigawatts. The North

Anna Nuclear Generating Station, Virginia's largest nuclear facility, produces slightly over 1.8 gigawatts. Fifteen North Anna stations' worth of capacity, roughly, for one county's buildout scenario. The Digital Gateway alone carried demand projections of approximately 3 gigawatts, more than a North Anna and a half, and the power infrastructure to serve it would be recovered from electricity ratepayers across Dominion's service territory, not from the developers who created the demand.[18] Dominion's transmission planner later put the total capacity its customers had requested for the campus higher, at 3,600 megawatts.[19] Part Eight documents what that cost recovery looks like in dockets and dollars.

Water consumption follows a parallel logic. Data centers generate enormous quantities of heat, and the cooling systems that manage it consume water at industrial volumes. Prince William Water reported that for the 2025 calendar year, data centers consumed approximately 3.8 percent of average daily water demand and 10.1 percent of maximum daily demand.[20] A single data center building can consume up to 88,000 gallons per day during peak summer months.[21] The geographic complication is that the Digital Gateway's location in western Prince William places it within the Potomac River water supply system: drinking water is drawn from the Potomac via Fairfax Water's Corbalis Treatment Plant, used by data centers for cooling, then treated at the Upper Occoquan Service Authority plant and discharged into the Occoquan Reservoir.[22] The process transfers water from the Potomac watershed into the Occoquan watershed, increasing the volume available for eastern Prince William but also increasing the burden on both treatment systems, and the UOSA discharge adds what the utility describes as a relatively constant, high-sodium flow whose effects concentrate in summer low-dilution conditions. Environmental groups warned that the impervious surfaces created by data center campuses would increase sediment runoff into the Occoquan Reservoir by an estimated 57,000 tons, threatening the long-term viability of the regional drinking water supply.[23] Part Eight returns to the watershed record.

The Demographic Profile

The Gainesville District, where the Digital Gateway and the related Devlin Technology Park are centered, is not the demographic profile that typically appears in environmental justice case studies. It is affluent, educated, and diverse. The district's population of 70,566 has a median household income of $137,048. Half of adults hold a bachelor's degree or higher. The racial composition is 46 percent White, 26 percent Hispanic or Latino, 12 percent Black, and 11 percent Asian.[13] The Oak Valley neighborhood, a community of 254 homes in the immediate vicinity of the proposed Digital Gateway campuses, would later provide the twelve plaintiffs who successfully sued to void the rezonings.[24]

This demographic profile matters for two reasons. First, it meant the affected community had the financial resources, the educational capital, and the civic infrastructure to mount a sustained legal and political challenge. The opposition was not a petition drive that faded after a few months; it was a multi-year campaign that produced recall petitions, a primary upset, multiple lawsuits, and a 27-hour public hearing. Second, and more relevant to the project's distributional framework, it complicates the standard environmental justice narrative. Unlike in Henrico's Varina District, the burden here fell not on a low-income community of color but on an affluent, educated, multiethnic suburb whose residents had purchased homes in a corridor designated for rural preservation and who discovered, in 2021, that the designation was negotiable.

For researchers working in the distributional justice framework, the Prince William case offers a different finding than Henrico or Hanover: governance capture can override planning protections regardless of the affected community's socioeconomic position. The residents of Pageland Lane and Oak Valley were not powerless. They had income, education, legal counsel, and political access. What they did not have, until the 2023 election, was a board majority free of financial entanglements with the developers seeking approval. And the eastern half of the county, less affluent and less organized, absorbed the existing buildout for years while the western fight drew the headlines; in 2026 the industry turned back east, and Part Nine documents who lives next to the new proposals.

PART TWO: THE DIGITAL GATEWAY

The Landowner Assemblage

The Digital Gateway began as a land deal, not a county initiative.

In the summer and fall of 2021, Compass Datacenters approached homeowners along Pageland Lane in the Gainesville District with purchase offers. The proposition was simple enough: sell your five-acre lot at a price that reflected not its agricultural value but its value as part of a data center corridor, contingent on a successful comprehensive plan amendment. Enough homeowners said yes to assemble approximately 2,139 acres of contiguous land across multiple parcels.

On November 4, 2021, nineteen homeowners in Catharpin Farm Estates, including Gainesville District Supervisor Pete Candland and his wife Robyn, jointly filed a comprehensive plan amendment application to redesignate their neighborhood from “agricultural/estate” to “tech/flex” for data center uses.[25] Candland had signed a contract to sell his home and five-acre property to Compass on October 25, 2021, ten days before the filing.[26] The circumstances of that contract, the conflict-of-interest ruling it triggered, and its consequences for Candland’s tenure on the board are documented in Part Four. For the purposes of the proposal narrative, the relevant fact is that when the CPA application was filed, one of the eight elected supervisors who would eventually be asked to vote on it was also one of the landowners who stood to profit from its approval.

The assemblage was not a hostile acquisition. The homeowners were willing sellers, many of them eager to cash out properties whose value as rural homesteads would be dwarfed by their value as parcels in a data center corridor. The developers, primarily QTS and Compass, structured the acquisitions through options and contracts contingent on the rezoning. The business logic was conventional: secure the land before the entitlements, then build once the zoning is in place. What was unconventional was the scale. The assemblage covered more acreage than most data center campuses in the country, and it sat inside a planning boundary that had been designated for rural preservation for twenty-three years. The structure of those contracts, under which nearly all of the sales were contingent and almost none ever closed, would come back to haunt both the sellers and the developers; Part Three documents the federal litigation that contingency produced.

The Comprehensive Plan Amendment

The CPA application, designated CPA2021-00004, asked the Board of County Supervisors to amend the comprehensive plan to allow data center development on approximately 2,139 acres of the Pageland Lane corridor. The amendment was a

prerequisite: without a plan change, the land could not be rezoned from agricultural to industrial, and without the rezoning, the data centers could not be built. The CPA was the first gate.

County planning staff reviewed the application and recommended denial.[27]

The recommendation was not ambiguous. Staff found that the proposed amendment was inconsistent with the county's comprehensive plan, that it would compromise the Rural Crescent's environmental and land-use protections, and that the application lacked sufficient specificity on environmental impacts, traffic, and infrastructure demands. The planning staff's job is to evaluate applications against the county's adopted planning framework and to advise the board accordingly. They did their job. The board overruled them. Every applicant that followed took note of what the overrule established: in Prince William County, a staff recommendation of denial was a step in the process, not an obstacle to approval.

The Fourteen-Hour Hearing: November 1, 2022

The Board of Supervisors took up the CPA on November 1, 2022. The public hearing ran more than fourteen hours. Nearly 240 speakers addressed the board.[28]

The opposition was organized. The Coalition to Protect Prince William County, led by Elena Schlossberg, had spent months mobilizing residents, mapping the environmental and infrastructure impacts, and building the case that the Digital Gateway would violate the Rural Crescent's planning protections. The National Parks Conservation Association weighed in with a report warning that data center development adjacent to Manassas Battlefield would threaten the park's viewshed and compromise its historical integrity.[29] Historians argued that construction on the Pageland Lane corridor could disturb unmarked Civil War graves. Residents described the acoustic environment of existing data centers, the low-frequency hum of cooling fans that operates twenty-four hours a day, and asked the board to imagine that sound carried across five-acre lots where they had purchased homes expecting rural quiet.

Proponents argued the fiscal case. Data center developers and their representatives projected between $400 million and $500 million in annual tax revenue, funding for schools and infrastructure, and the economic diversification that would reduce the county's dependence on residential property taxes.

The vote was 5-2 along party lines. The five Democrats in favor: Wheeler, Angry, Bailey, Franklin, and Boddye. The two Republicans opposed: Lawson and Vega. Candland, who had been required to recuse by Commonwealth's Attorney Amy Ashworth's May 2022 opinion under the State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act, did not participate.[30] His seat was, for the purpose of this vote,

empty. The CPA passed with the votes of the five remaining Democrats against the two remaining Republicans.

The Thirteen-Month Gap

Between the CPA vote in November 2022 and the rezoning vote in December 2023, three things happened that changed the political ground entirely.

First, Candland resigned. On December 10, 2022, five weeks after the CPA vote from which he had been forced to recuse, Candland announced his resignation, effective December 16. The resignation followed a second, broader opinion from Commonwealth's Attorney Ashworth, received December 9, concluding that Candland could not participate in any comprehensive plan vote or any data center vote in the county until the Digital Gateway rezoning process was complete. The circumstances of the resignation, Candland's subsequent employment by LSI Communications, and the revolving-door questions that followed are documented in Part Four.[31]

Second, Wheeler lost her primary. On June 20, 2023, Deshundra Jefferson, a political newcomer running explicitly on curbing data center approvals, defeated incumbent Board Chair Ann Wheeler in the Democratic primary by a margin of 52.46 percent to 47.54 percent. Wheeler had outraised Jefferson roughly three-and-a-half to one in the first quarter of 2023. She lost anyway. The AP, the Washington Post, and local outlets characterized the result as a direct backlash against the Digital Gateway.[32] The full account of the election is in Part Five. The relevant fact for Part Two is that by the time the rezoning applications came to a vote, the chair of the board had already been repudiated by the voters of her own party over the project she was about to approve.

Third, planning staff reviewed the rezoning applications and, again, recommended denial, and on November 8, 2023, the Planning Commission did the same. Staff concluded that the applications fell short of the framework established by the 2022 CPA itself, citing inadequate specificity in building elevations and blueprints and insufficient commitments on open space preservation.[33] The county's professional planners had now recommended against the Digital Gateway at both stages of the approval process. Both times, the board voted to overrule them.

The Twenty-Seven-Hour Hearing: December 12-13, 2023

The Board of Supervisors convened on December 12, 2023, to hear the three Digital Gateway rezoning applications. The hearing did not end until the following day. It ran twenty-seven continuous hours, adjourning at 1:14 p.m. on December 13, with more than seventeen hours of public comment from over two hundred citizens.[34][35]

The hearing was, by any measure, the most sustained public engagement on a single land-use question in Prince William County's history. Speakers against the project reprised and expanded the arguments from the CPA hearing: the destruction of the Rural Crescent, the proximity to Manassas Battlefield, the water and power demands, the noise, the precedent. Speakers in favor reprised the fiscal argument. The hearing lasted through the night.

The Vote: 4-3-1

The board voted at the end of the meeting, which adjourned at 1:14 p.m. on December 13, 2023. The result was 4-3-1.[36]

Four Democrats voted yes: Wheeler, Margaret Angela Franklin, Andrea Bailey, and Victor Angry. Three Republicans voted no: Jeanine Lawson, Yesli Vega, and Bob Weir. Democrat Kenny Boddye abstained. Moments earlier, Weir's motion to deny all three rezonings had failed 4-4, with Boddye voting with the three Republicans to deny.[36]

Boddye's abstention was the decisive procedural act. Had he voted no, the result would have been 4-4 and the rezonings would have failed. The Prince William Times reported that he had "mixed feelings." His stated reasons: he said the plans were not "completely in line" with the board's comprehensive plan amendment "based on staff analysis," and he cited his own reading of a last-minute change in the project's "floor-area ratio," the density allowed closest to the Manassas National Battlefield Park. "I couldn't, in good conscience, vote to approve it completely based on those inconsistencies," he said.[37] The abstention satisfied no one. Opponents saw it as a refusal to block a project he knew was flawed. Proponents saw it as an unnecessary hedge on a project that had already cleared the CPA. Boddye later said that had the board not acted, it would have left the project "in a limbo" that few on either side wanted.

Weir's Warning

Supervisor Bob Weir, who voted no, delivered the sharpest critique from the dais. His closing remarks, preserved on the county's archived video of the session, ranged from process to consequence. "First law of digging holes is when you find yourself in one, stop digging," he told his colleagues. "This process quite frankly is almost a travesty and it's divided this county and pitted neighbor versus neighbor." On the county's professional staff: "County staff has been under enormous pressure. I would argue that at any number of times during the past year, somebody's thumb has been put on the scale." And on what approval would buy: "No matter what we do from this day as today, it will most assuredly result in lengthy, expensive litigation. Litigation paid for with Prince William County tax dollars."[38]

Weir did not live to see how precisely that last warning landed. He died of metastatic colon cancer on July 20, 2025, at age 62, two and a half weeks before the Circuit Court voided the rezonings he had voted against, and nine months before the county ended its defense of them, at a cost it put at roughly $1.7 million.[39] He had been elected to the Gainesville District seat in the February 2023 special election that followed Candland's resignation, and ran unopposed for a full term that November.

Weir also pressed the infrastructure arithmetic. The project's roughly three gigawatts of projected demand would require power infrastructure investment in the billions, and the layout, he argued, left no room for the transmission infrastructure Dominion would need to build without encroaching on the open space the developers had promised to preserve. The power had to come from somewhere. The lines had to go somewhere. And the cost of building them would be recovered from ratepayers, not developers.[40]

Wheeler's Closing Remarks

Board Chair Wheeler, who voted yes, used her closing remarks to answer the project's opponents, and her actual words from the dais deserve precise quotation because published accounts compressed them. She returned repeatedly to the theme that "the facts didn't seem to matter" in the public debate, saying she had been "naive" to think they would. She said residents of the Heritage Hunt community had been shown "horrific pictures" and "propaganda" about the project by parties she did not identify, and that the community had never let the applicant present to it. "When people fail on policy they go to process," she said, "and when they lose on process they start attacking people." She defended the project as "$40 billion dollars of investment in this county which would be transformational," adding that "most places would kill for that kind of investment."[41]

Margaret Barthel's DCist account, published the day of the vote, characterized those remarks as Wheeler accusing opponents of "spreading misinformation, refusing to come to the table to consider the idea in good faith, and engaging in character assassination of members of the board." The characterization is Barthel's paraphrase, not Wheeler's phrasing, and this case study attributes it accordingly.[42] In a post-vote interview published by Virginia Business at the end of December, Wheeler framed the county's posture in a sentence that opponents would quote back for years: "We're a county that tries to keep up with the Joneses."[43] The remarks from the dais drew immediate backlash from residents who had testified through the night and heard the chair describe their resistance as a failure of facts. The interview quote sealed the impression. Neither required exaggeration to do its work, which is why the case study quotes both exactly.

The Lame-Duck Context

The December 13 rezoning vote requires one additional piece of context that Part Five will develop in full but that cannot be omitted here.

Ann Wheeler had already lost. She had been defeated in the June 20, 2023 Democratic primary by Deshundra Jefferson, a candidate who ran on a platform of curbing data center approvals and raising the industry tax rate. In the November 7, 2023 general election, Jefferson defeated Republican nominee Jeanine Lawson to win the chairmanship. The new board was scheduled to be seated in January 2024.

The outgoing board acted on both major pending applications during its final weeks: the Devlin Technology Park, a separate data center project on 270 acres in the Gainesville District, approved November 28, 2023, and the Digital Gateway rezonings, approved December 13, 2023, eighteen days before the new board members took office.[44] Whether the timing reflected deliberate acceleration or ordinary scheduling is a question the public record does not resolve. What the record shows is the result: both approvals were granted after the voters had delivered their verdict and before the new board could act on it, over the objections of the community that had just voted to change the board’s composition.

What the lame-duck board could not control was whether its work would survive contact with the courts.

PART THREE: THE COLLAPSE IN THE COURTS

The litigation that followed the December 2023 votes ran on two separate tracks, and keeping them separate is essential to understanding what died, when, and why.

Track One: The CPA Challenge

Residents challenged the November 2022 comprehensive plan amendment in Prince William County Circuit Court, arguing that the board had failed in a statutory duty to "listen to and consider" public comments before voting. Judge James A. Willett dismissed the case on demurrer. The Court of Appeals of Virginia affirmed on July 22, 2025, in a published opinion holding that the relevant statutes did not impose a judicially enforceable duty of that kind; the case is Oak Valley Homeowners Association v. Prince William County Board of Supervisors, Record No. 1144-24-4.[45] The Supreme Court of Virginia refused the plaintiffs' petition for appeal on December 23, 2025.[46] The CPA track is finished. The plan amendment stands.

Track Two: The Rezoning Challenge

The rezoning track ended differently, and it is the reason the Digital Gateway does not exist.

Twelve homeowners from the Oak Valley neighborhood filed suit in Circuit Court challenging the December 2023 rezonings.[47] A second group of ten landowners, the Burke plaintiffs, brought a parallel challenge supported by the American Battlefield Trust, with former state senator Chap Petersen as lead counsel; Judge Tracy C. Hudson sustained the county's demurrer in that case, and the plaintiffs appealed.[48]

On August 7, 2025, Circuit Court Judge Kimberly A. Irving ruled for the Oak Valley plaintiffs and declared the three Digital Gateway rezonings void ab initio. The court identified two fatal procedural failures: the public hearing notices published in the Washington Post did not meet the statutory requirements for advertising, and the application materials referenced in those notices were not available to the public at the time the first advertisement ran.[49] The ruling voided the rezonings entirely, as if they had never been adopted.

The county and the developers appealed. The Court of Appeals issued a stay on October 28, 2025, then partially reconsidered on November 17, 2025, barring any land disturbance or construction at the site during the appeal.[50] Oral argument was heard on February 24, 2026, in Arlington, before Judges Randolph A. Beales, Stuart A. Raphael, and David Bernhard. The consolidated appeals were Record Nos. 1590-25-4, 1584-25-4, and 1592-25-4, brought by the Board of County Supervisors, the two QTS acquisition entities, and H&H Capital Acquisitions respectively, heard

together with the Burke appeal, Record No. 2025-24-4.[51] Amici lined up on both sides: the Virginia Association for Commercial Real Estate, NAIOP Northern Virginia, and the Home Builders Association of Virginia for the appellants; the Piedmont Environmental Council, the National Parks Conservation Association, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the Coalition to Protect Prince William County, among others, for the appellees.

March 31, 2026: The Affirmance

On March 31, 2026, the Court of Appeals affirmed, in a unanimous published opinion by Judge Raphael.[52]

The record the court affirmed begins with an email nobody answered.

On Monday, November 20, 2023, shortly after noon, the clerk of the Board of County Supervisors emailed the Washington Post to place the advertisement that state law required before the December 12 rezoning hearing: once a week for two successive weeks, the first notice no more than fourteen days before adoption.[53] The Post replied two hours later with a price, $7,509.48, and a caution: “Saved ads will not run unless they are scheduled and submitted.” Two minutes after that came a second email, asking the clerk to confirm the publication request by 3:00 p.m. the next day. The clerk neither called nor wrote. The deadline passed, and the November 28 advertisement never ran. The opinion states the bottom line flatly: “It is undisputed that the first ad did not run on November 28, but the parties dispute who was responsible.”[54]

Everything else flowed downhill from that missed afternoon. The two-week schedule could no longer be met unless the hearing moved, and the hearing did not move. The Post agreed to a compressed makeup run instead, three ads on December 2, December 5, and December 9, and the Court of Appeals held each of the three independently defective. The December 2 and December 5 ads failed the where-to-review requirement. An advertisement must tell citizens where the proposed ordinances “may be examined,” which means the ordinances must actually be available for examination when the ad runs; Judge Irving found that the county did not place the draft ordinances in the clerk’s office “until December 7, 2023,” after both ads had come and gone.[55] The finding had a witness. Kara Klaas testified that she walked into the clerk’s office on December 4 with the December 2 newspaper ad in hand and asked to see the documents it referenced. The clerk and the deputy clerk both told her the documents “would not be available until December 7th.”[55] The December 9 ad solved the availability problem and created a new one: it ran three days before the December 12 hearing, inside the five-day minimum the county’s own zoning ordinance sets.[56] The holding gathered all of it into one

sentence: none of the three public advertisements satisfied Virginia Code § 15.2-2204(A) or Prince William County Zoning Ordinance § 32-700.60.[57]

The board's first defense was to blame the newspaper. The statute contains a safe harbor for a locality that submits "a correct and timely notice request" only to have the paper fail to publish it. Following Judge Irving's fact-finding, the panel closed that door in a single line: "the Post was not at fault for failing to publish the ad, the Board was."[58] The county had not submitted a correct and timely request. It had submitted a saved ad and let the confirmation deadline lapse.

The second defense was that the defects harmed no one, since thousands of residents knew about the hearing and hundreds testified at it. The court answered that the actual-notice saving provision excuses failures of written notice to adjacent landowners, not failures of public advertising, and that the board's reading "would invite sandbagging": a board chair could sit on a proposed ordinance until the eve of the meeting, then point to the crowd as proof that no one was hurt. Virginia's zoning statutes, the panel wrote, quoting Glazebrook, exist to prevent zoning changes from being made "suddenly, arbitrarily, or capriciously."[59]

Suddenly is a fair description of the winter of 2023 in Prince William County. The compression that produced the defective ads was the same compression that produced the rest of the December record: a chair the voters had already repudiated and a hearing date the calendar would not let slip. The meeting adjourned at 1:14 p.m. the following day, twenty-seven hours after it began, after more than seventeen hours of public comment delivered to a majority whose course was set.[35] The court noticed the connection. Wheeler cast the deciding vote and her term ended in 2023, the panel observed, and it is "unclear whether the Board would have approved the rezonings if the question had been postponed to a later hearing date to satisfy the advertising rules."[35] The haste and the defect had a single cause. The lame-duck window is why the hearing date could not move, and the hearing date that could not move is what converted one unanswered email into a fatal flaw.

QTS would later tell the Supreme Court of Virginia that the rezonings had been nullified over "highly technical notice provisions that harmed no one," and that "technical foot-faults can have massive economic consequences."[60] The Court of Appeals had already supplied the answer. The General Assembly "adopted a per se rule that specifies exactly how to advertise," under which "a locality's missing the deadlines by even one day renders the resulting ordinance invalid."[61] A per se rule is a rule about foot-faults. The legislature wrote it that way so that the validity of an ordinance would never turn on a judge's after-the-fact estimate of who was harmed by a notice no one saw. The panel was equally plain about what it was not deciding: "Our resolution of the issues presented here is not influenced by the vibrant public

debate surrounding data-center development. It is not our place to take sides in that debate."[61] The court never reached the Rural Crescent, the battlefield, the water, or the three gigawatts. It did not need to. The county's power to legislate depended on the advertising, and the advertising depended on an email that sat unanswered past a 3:00 p.m. deadline.

The disposition was complete. The court affirmed the judgment declaring the Compass, DG South, and DG North rezonings, Ordinances 23-57, 23-58, and 23-59, void ab initio. In the Burke case, it reversed the demurrer ruling on the advertising count and entered final judgment for the plaintiffs, finding no reason to remand because the Oak Valley affirmance mooted any need for further relief. And anticipating what would come next, the panel continued the partial stay it had entered in November: the judgment's effectiveness is stayed pending any further appeal, except that the prohibition on land disturbance and construction remains fully in force.[62]

The reasoning matters beyond Prince William. Every Virginia locality processing a data center rezoning now operates under a published appellate holding that procedural shortcuts in public notice are not cured by the size of the crowd that shows up anyway.

The Unraveling: April-July 2026

What followed the affirmance was a procession of exits.

On April 14, 2026, the Board of County Supervisors voted unanimously to direct the county attorney and outside counsel not to petition the Supreme Court of Virginia. The county's defense of the lame-duck approvals was over, at a documented cost of roughly $1.7 million.[63] The board that included two members who had voted for the rezonings in 2023, Bailey and Angry, chose not to spend another dollar defending them. Former chair Wheeler had told InsideNoVa in late summer 2025, as the board weighed its first appeal, that she had no regrets about her vote.[64]

On April 28, 2026, Compass Datacenters announced it would not contest the ruling. "While we still believe this project offered significant benefits for the region and our neighbors," Compass president AJ Byers said, "recent legal actions and compounding regulatory hurdles have effectively closed a viable path forward."[65] Compass held contracts on roughly half the assemblage. It began winding them down.

On April 30, 2026, less than three hours before the 11:59 p.m. deadline, QTS's acquisition entities filed notices of appeal and petitions for appeal with the Supreme Court of Virginia in both the Oak Valley and Burke cases. The petition's framing was maximal: "This case involves the Court of Appeals' unprecedented nullification of

three Prince William County zoning amendments that would have brought tens of billions of dollars in investment, and thousands of jobs, to Virginia," resting on what QTS called "highly technical notice provisions that harmed no one."[66] The Oak Valley plaintiffs' brief in opposition, filed May 21, 2026, argued that the petition is effectively moot: because the board itself did not appeal, the court cannot grant QTS relief without ordering a county that has abandoned the rezonings to implement them, which would amount to an advisory opinion.[67]

The petition never reached a writ panel; the court's writ panels do not sit in July or August, and the earliest it could have been heard was September 2026, with a merits decision toward mid-2027 if the writ were granted.[68] On July 2, 2026, GW Acquisition Co., LLC and GW Acquisition Co. I, LLC filed notice withdrawing it. QTS, the entities' parent, a Blackstone portfolio company since 2021, said it had decided "after careful consideration" to terminate the project and would pursue "a responsible wind-down."[69] The county had walked away in April. Compass followed two weeks later. QTS held on alone for nine more weeks, then set the project down two days before the nation's 250th birthday, on land beside Manassas National Battlefield. The American Battlefield Trust's president called it "a banner day for the historic preservation community" and said the Trust would pursue a conservation-friendly outcome for the Pageland Lane corridor.[69] With the withdrawal, the partial stay the Court of Appeals had continued pending further appeal expired by its own terms, and the judgment took full effect: Ordinances 23-57, 23-58, and 23-59 are void ab initio, and there is no court left to ask.[62] The ledgers close unevenly. The county put its rezoning defense at about $1.7 million as of March 31, 2026; InsideNoVa reported $1.72 million.[63] The county's total Digital Gateway legal bill, a separate and still-running tab that also covers the defense of seventeen suits from landowners challenging reassessments tied to the project, has passed $2 million.[70]

The Sellers in Limbo

The collapse stranded the people the project was built on. More than one hundred Pageland Lane landowners signed contingent sale contracts in 2021 and 2022. Nearly all of those sales never closed; the developers' obligations were contingent on entitlements that are now void. QTS closed on a single family's property in January 2024. From November 17, 2025, the Court of Appeals barred any land disturbance or construction pending appeal, and no demolition or grading on the corridor had been reported as of July 5, 2026.[50] The corridor the Digital Gateway was to industrialize remains, physically, what it was in 2021, except that its tax treatment and its politics have been through a war. Land along the corridor that had been reassessed toward data center values, reported as high as $1.5 million per acre, was marked back down to roughly $329,000, and homes slated for demolition

had been carried on the books at $100 while their owners continued living in them, with some facing deferred tax exposure if the sales collapse for good.[71]

In February 2026, the sellers sued the developer. Mary Ann Ghadban, a Pageland Lane landowner who had agreed to sell to QTS, joined by Page Snyder and other landowner families, filed suit against GW Acquisition Co., LLC, a QTS acquisition entity, in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, seeking a declaratory judgment over their purchase agreements. On May 22, 2026, Judge Leonie M. Brinkema stayed the case pending the Supreme Court of Virginia's resolution of the zoning appeal, with a joint status report due by October 30, 2026.[72][73] GW Acquisition counterclaimed against the landowners (the mirrors read do not show when), and on April 24, before the stay, Ghadban filed a motion to dismiss; neither filing was read.[74] The July 2 withdrawal dissolved the stay's premise, and the case never reached the October date. On September 11, 2026, GW Acquisition filed a stipulation of dismissal, and on September 14 Judge Brinkema signed a consent order of dismissal; the docket marks the case terminated that day. The three-page order was not read for this study, so its terms, including whether any claim was dismissed with prejudice and whether the dismissal released the landowners from their contracts, are not established here.[75] The status of the seventeen reassessment suits noted above was not checked. The Prince William Times reported in May that roughly half of the landowners still under contract with QTS, holding about 812 acres among them, were suing to get out.[76] The sellers who were promised generational wealth spent nearly seven months in federal court trying to recover their ordinary lives.

For the distributional justice framework, the Pageland Lane sellers complicate the usual categories. They were not displaced by the industry; they volunteered for displacement at premium prices and were left holding contracts on land whose rezoning the courts voided. The holdouts who refused to sell, and the Oak Valley neighbors who sued, kept their homes and won. The willing sellers were the ones left in limbo.

Track Three: Devlin, the Project That Survived

The Devlin Technology Park's litigation ran the opposite direction. Residents who challenged the November 2023 Devlin rezoning lost before Judge Carroll A. Weimer Jr. in Circuit Court in June 2024 and again at the Court of Appeals on September 16, 2025, where a panel of Judges Raphael, Lisa M. Lorish, and Steven C. Frucci, in an unpublished memorandum opinion by Judge Lorish, held the board had acted within its legislative discretion; the case is Caparoula v. Board of County Supervisors, Record No. 1137-24-4.[77] Devlin stands.

What stood was promptly sold. On November 5, 2025, Amazon Data Services closed on 189 of the site's 270 acres for $700 million, reported as a record per-acre price for data center land, with entitlements for up to 3.5 million square feet and as many as three substations. No groundbreaking had been reported as of June 12, 2026.[78]

Two Projects, Two Outcomes

The divergence matters even more in 2026 than it did when the two projects were approved. The Digital Gateway and Devlin were approved by the same board, during the same lame-duck period, against the same political backdrop. One is void, and the developer that spent April trying to save it spent July winding it down. The other is owned by Amazon and entitled for 3.5 million square feet. The difference was not substance; it was process. The Digital Gateway failed because the county did not follow its own notice requirements. Devlin survived because it did. For opponents, the Digital Gateway ruling vindicated four years of organizing and litigation. For the county and the developers, it confirmed that the substantive questions, whether the Rural Crescent should be industrialized, whether the infrastructure demands could be met, whether the planning staff's two recommendations of denial should have been heeded, were never resolved by any institution. The board overrode the planners. The voters overrode the board. The courts voided the board's final act without ever reaching the merits. Weir's prediction from the dais, that the approvals would buy nothing but lengthy and expensive litigation at taxpayer expense, turned out to be the most accurate fiscal projection anyone offered that night.

The case study now turns to the reason those substantive questions were never seriously weighed by the board that answered them: the financial entanglements documented in Part Four.

PART FOUR: THE FINANCIAL ENTANGLEMENTS

This is the section that distinguishes this case study from the other documents in the portfolio. The Henrico case documents a regulatory reversal. The Hanover case documents a refusal. This case documents what happens when the officials deciding whether to approve an industrial project have financial entanglements with the developers seeking that approval. The evidence is drawn from Statements of Economic Interests, Commonwealth's Attorney opinions, campaign finance records maintained by the Virginia Public Access Project, county board minutes, the county code, named journalist reporting, and the recall petitions filed against two of the three officials discussed in this study. Every factual claim in this section is sourced to a public record or to named reporting with a byline. Where the record is ambiguous, the ambiguity is noted. Where the record is incomplete, the gap is flagged.

Pete Candland (R-Gainesville District)

The Timeline

Pete Candland represented the Gainesville District on the Prince William County Board of Supervisors for nearly a decade. In his early tenure, he was a vocal advocate for raising the county's data center equipment tax rate. At the board's April 17, 2018 budget session, supporting then-chair Corey Stewart's proposal to take the rate from $1.25 to $3.70, he put it plainly: "Residents have been subsidizing data centers over the past seven years by carving out (an incentive rate) for this special interest. The status quo isn't working." The next spring he co-authored Stewart's five-year plan to step the rate to $2.50, voted in February 2019 to open talks with the industry on a multi-year increase, and said the big data centers had been given a "sweetheart" deal. Both pushes failed.[79] The irony of what followed deserves noting, because the supervisor who pushed hardest for taxing data centers at a higher rate became, within two years, a financial participant in the largest data center proposal in the county's history.

On October 25, 2021, Candland and his wife, Robyn, signed a contract to sell their home and five-acre property on Pageland Lane to Compass Datacenters. The contract itself is private; its existence and date are recorded in a Comprehensive Plan Amendment Initiation Form and a Special Power of Attorney and Interest Disclosure.[80] Ten days later, on November 4, 2021, Candland joined eighteen other homeowners in Catharpin Farm Estates in filing a comprehensive plan amendment application to redesignate their neighborhood from "agricultural/estate" to "tech/flex" for data center uses.[81] The following May, Commonwealth's Attorney Amy Ashworth issued a written opinion, the letter dated

May 23, 2022, under the State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act ruling that Candland must recuse himself from specific Digital Gateway matters due to his direct financial interest in property within the project area.[82]

The Recall

On June 28, 2022, the Coalition to Protect Prince William County launched a recall petition against Candland, alleging “neglect of duty and misuse of office.”[83] The Gainesville District threshold required 1,796 signatures, based on ten percent of votes cast in the last election for that office. Organizers collected 4,338 signatures between June and December 2022 and had validated more than 1,900 of them, past the threshold, by the time Candland resigned; the petition was never submitted to the Circuit Court for certification because the resignation made it moot.

The Resignation

On December 9, 2022, Candland received a second, broader opinion from Ashworth concluding that he could not participate in any comprehensive plan vote or any data center vote in the county until the Digital Gateway rezoning process was finalized.[84] The practical effect was to render him unable to vote on most of the significant land-use business before the board for the foreseeable future.

The following day, December 10, 2022, Candland announced his resignation, effective December 16. In his public statement, he cited the restrictive conflict-of-interest ruling as the reason, saying it prevented him from effectively representing his district on major issues.[85] He did not characterize the resignation as an acknowledgment of wrongdoing. He characterized it as a functional impossibility: the ruling had made his continued service unworkable.

The Revolving Door

By March 2023, three months after leaving office, Candland was working for LSI Communications, also styled LSI 360, a lobbying and communications firm founded in March 2022 by Travis Turner of Warrenton and engaged to do communications work for the Digital Gateway. The firm’s documented work centered on representing Pageland Lane landowners seeking to sell their properties to data center developers, the same category of land transactions that had produced Candland’s own conflict of interest.[86]

On September 20, 2023, Supervisor Jeanine Lawson (R-Brentsville) held a press conference at which she released emails showing Candland offering to help a data center developer navigate the county’s land-use approval process. Lawson called for the Commonwealth’s Attorney and Attorney General Jason Miyares to investigate

whether Candland's post-resignation consulting work violated revolving-door restrictions.[87]

The referral was closed within three months, and the closure deserves exact characterization. Ashworth's office forwarded Lawson's documents to the Virginia State Police, whose initial review was authorized by the Attorney General's office. In December 2023, Ashworth's office notified Lawson of the result: "After a preliminary inquiry, the assigned special agent reported that he could not find any violations of the Prince William County Code in the documents contained in your letter. Based on his determination, no investigation will be conducted by the State Police. This office concurs with his decision and will take no further action at this time." Candland's response was unequivocal: "Let me be unequivocally clear: These allegations are completely false… At no point did I violate any county or state code regarding the actions of former elected officials."[88] No charges had been reported as of June 12, 2026, and nothing in the record through that date reopened the matter. A preliminary inquiry that found no county-code violation is not an exoneration on the broader governance question, but it is what the legal record contains, and the case study characterizes it as exactly that.

The Ordinance That Existed

Prince William County has had a revolving-door ordinance for three decades, and its existence reframes the legal question.

Virginia Code Section 2.2-3104 imposes a one-year post-service lobbying prohibition on state officers; it does not reach county supervisors. For counties under the County Executive form of government with populations over 100,000, Virginia Code Section 15.2-515 authorizes a local ordinance prohibiting former officers and employees, for one year, from providing compensated personal and substantial assistance on county matters in which they participated personally and substantially while in office.[89] Prince William County adopted exactly that ordinance in 1991. County Code Sections 2-51 through 2-53, enacted as Ordinance 91-69 on June 4, 1991 and amended in 1999, track the enabling statute nearly verbatim, define "participated personally and substantially," and make violations punishable as a misdemeanor. The code even permits the board, by resolution, to waive the prohibition for a particular officer.[90]

The ordinance's existence explains two pieces of the record: the 2019 County Attorney opinion that referenced "state and county revolving door laws," and the reporting that LSI consulted counsel before hiring Candland to ensure the move did not violate the county's revolving-door policy.[91] It also sharpens the analytical point. The question was never whether Prince William had a revolving-door rule. It had one for three decades. The question is what the rule's scope excludes: the

prohibition reaches only matters in which the former official "participated personally and substantially… through decision, approval, or recommendation" while in office. Candland's documented post-resignation consulting concerned, among other things, a rezoning filed after he left office. The State Police special agent found no county-code violation, a conclusion consistent with the ordinance's design. A former supervisor can lawfully assist data center developers in the county he governed, on applications filed after his departure, within months of resigning over a data center conflict. The ordinance does not prohibit the pattern that occurred, and was never built to.

The Institutional Spread

The LSI connection did not end with Candland, and by 2026 it had become the connective tissue of the next assemblage.

By December 2025, Brentsville District School Board member Erica Tredinnick was employed by LSI Communications, a fact she confirmed on the record.[92] The case study does not allege that Tredinnick's employment constitutes a conflict of interest; School Board members do not vote on land-use decisions, and Tredinnick's response to the reporting was direct: "I follow the law," citing the Conflict of Interests Act and School Board policy, and declining to apologize for earning a living. School Board Chairman Babur Lateef said he did not view the employment as a problem.[93] The relevance is institutional rather than individual: the same lobbying firm that hired a former supervisor who resigned under a conflict-of-interest ruling now employs a sitting School Board member in the same county, and that School Board member has presented land-sale offers to residents alongside Candland and the firm's attorney.

The next assemblage is the one those offers serve. The Sanders Lane assemblage, roughly 1,940 acres across approximately 250 properties north of Pageland Lane, branded the "Dulles South Innovation Center," advanced from solicitation to formal application in early 2026. An LSI affiliate filed a cultural resources assessment, a pre-application step, in December 2025; county staff expected it to be completed in mid-January 2026. By late April 2026 the Prince William Times reported that the buyer had filed for a comprehensive plan amendment and zoning change to allow data centers; the county's Development Application Processing Schedule confirms it: CPA2026-00012, "Dulles South Innovation Center," submitted March 3, 2026, seeking to redesignate 1,939.91 acres in the Gainesville District from agricultural and mixed-use designations to heavy industrial.[94] The project, if built, could surpass the Digital Gateway in size. An email from Tredinnick to one neighborhood group stated the developers were "still targeting a Board of County Supervisors vote in Q4 2026."[95] On July 7, 2026, two days after this study's evidence snapshot, the

board refused the applicant's request to defer, 7-1, and then declined unanimously to initiate the amendment, as county staff had recommended. A refusal to initiate stops a comprehensive plan amendment at its first step; it is not a ruling on a rezoning.[96]

The solicitation has spread well beyond Sanders Lane. The Times' April 2026 investigation found residents of at least a dozen western Prince William neighborhoods had received assemblage offers, at prices from $500,000 to $1 million per acre and contract terms that Patrick Harders, the Republican candidate in the 2025 Gainesville special election, whose neighbors had received offers, called "predatory": small escrow deposits, payment contingent on final rezoning, the same structure that left the Pageland Lane sellers in limbo. Former board chair Corey Stewart, who as chair led the failed 2018 and 2019 pushes to raise the data center rate documented above, works with LSI on solicitation; Candland told the Times he left LSI around spring 2025, though the same article documents him presenting an offer to Robin Lane residents alongside Tredinnick and attorney Mark Looney in late fall 2025.[97] The firm that employed the supervisor who resigned over the first assemblage filed the application for the second one. A former board chair and a former Gainesville supervisor have worked the same side of the same street.

Ann Wheeler (D-At Large, Board Chair)

The Investments

Ann Wheeler served as Prince William County Board of Supervisors Chair, the county's highest elected office, from January 2020 through December 2023. During the period in which the Digital Gateway progressed from initiation through CPA adoption to rezoning approval, Wheeler's Statement of Economic Interests filings disclosed significant investments in companies with direct business interests in the project.

The filings, maintained by the Prince William County Clerk of the Board and available on the county's disclosure forms page, show the following progression:[98]

On Wheeler's 2020 filing, covering calendar year 2019, she disclosed Amazon in the $5,001 to $50,000 range. Neither Blackstone nor Microsoft appeared.

On her 2021 filing, covering calendar year 2020, Amazon moved to the $50,001 to $250,000 range. Microsoft appeared for the first time in the same range. Blackstone did not appear.

On her 2022 filing, dated February 13, 2022 and covering calendar year 2021, Blackstone Inc. appeared for the first time at $50,001 to $250,000. Amazon and Microsoft remained in the same range. Apple Inc. also appeared at $50,001 to

$250,000. The filing disclosed a portfolio that had grown from 26 disclosed positions in 2020 to 66 positions in 2022, more than doubling in two years.[99]

The Blackstone disclosure is the one that matters for the case study. Blackstone Infrastructure Partners and related Blackstone funds acquired QTS Realty Trust in a $10 billion transaction that closed in 2021.[100] QTS was the lead developer on two of the three Digital Gateway rezonings. When Wheeler voted in favor of the Digital Gateway CPA at the meeting of November 1, 2022, she held between $50,001 and $250,000 in the parent company of one of the project's developers, unless she had divested earlier that year; the record on timing is examined below.

On her 2023 filing, dated January 22, 2023 and covering calendar year 2022, Blackstone no longer appears. Amazon also no longer appears. Microsoft remains at $50,001 to $250,000.[101] Wheeler had publicly stated on July 7, 2022, that she and her husband "have divested ourselves of any interest in the Blackstone Fund."[102] The 2023 filing confirms the divestiture occurred at some point during calendar year 2022. The precise date is not documented in the public record.

The timing matters because it creates an ambiguity the case study must acknowledge rather than resolve. The CPA vote came at the meeting of November 1, 2022, on the morning of November 2. Wheeler stated she divested in mid-2022. The SEI covering calendar year 2022 confirms the position is gone but does not specify the month; the form requires year-end holdings, not transaction dates. If she sold before the November vote, she voted on the CPA without an active Blackstone position. If she sold after, she voted while still holding the stock. The public record does not resolve the question. What the record does resolve is that she held the position during the period when the Digital Gateway was being initiated and processed, that she did not recuse, and that the Commonwealth's Attorney did not issue a disqualifying opinion comparable to the one issued against Candland.

The Recall and the Referral Request

On July 12, 2022, the Coalition to Protect Prince William County launched a recall petition against Wheeler.[103] Because the Board Chair is elected countywide, the signature threshold was 11,209, more than six times the Gainesville District threshold that applied to Candland. By mid-December 2022, organizers claimed they had gathered nearly 12,000 signatures. The effort was dropped in late March 2023; organizers announced they would redirect their energy toward the June 20 Democratic primary, where they believed a challenger could defeat Wheeler through the electoral process rather than the recall process.[104]

Separately, on June 29, 2022, Gainesville Citizens for Smart Growth sent a letter to County Attorney Michelle Robl formally requesting an investigation into whether

Wheeler's financial interests influenced the July 2021 initiation of the Digital Gateway study. The letter suggested the matter warranted an FBI referral.[105] The letter is a public document hosted on the Coalition's website. No confirmation of an active FBI investigation was located in any public record or named reporting as of June 2026. The case study treats the letter as an advocacy communication, not as evidence of a federal investigation.

Wheeler's Defense

Wheeler maintained throughout the controversy that her investments were held in managed portfolios, that they did not constitute a disqualifying conflict under state law, and that the Commonwealth's Attorney had cleared her of any legal violation.[106] She did not recuse from either the CPA vote or the rezoning vote. The 2023 filing, covering calendar year 2022, shows the Blackstone and Amazon positions gone before the December 2023 rezoning vote; no filing covering 2023 is cited here. The Microsoft position, at $50,001 to $250,000, appears on the filings covering 2020, 2021 and 2022; Microsoft is a major data center operator but was not an applicant on the Digital Gateway rezonings.

The difference between Candland's case and Wheeler's is the difference between a direct property transaction and a portfolio investment. Candland signed a contract to sell real property to one of the developers. Wheeler held publicly traded stock in the parent company of one of the developers. The Commonwealth's Attorney treated these differently: Candland was required to recuse; Wheeler was not. Reasonable people can disagree about whether a $50,001 to $250,000 position in the parent company of a project applicant should require recusal. The Virginia Conflict of Interests Act establishes the legal standard. Whether that standard is adequate to the governance challenge posed by data center development, where publicly traded companies like Blackstone, Amazon, and Microsoft are simultaneously major index-fund holdings and active participants in local land-use decisions, is a policy question the case study raises but does not attempt to answer.

What the record establishes is the sequence. Wheeler's disclosed holdings in data-center-affiliated companies grew sharply during her tenure as chair, peaking during the period when the Digital Gateway was moving through the approval process. She voted in favor of the project at both stages. She did not recuse. She lost her primary to a candidate who ran against the project. She then presided over the lame-duck approvals of both the Digital Gateway rezonings and the Devlin Technology Park before the new board was seated. In late summer 2025, after the Circuit Court voided the rezonings, she said she had no regrets.[64]

The Pattern

The Candland and Wheeler cases are different in their specifics but identical in their structural implication: the officials making the land-use decisions had financial interests connected to the industry seeking those decisions. In Candland's case, the interest was direct and disqualifying. In Wheeler's case, it was indirect and legally permissible under the Commonwealth's Attorney's reading of the statute. In both cases, the community's response was the same: recall petitions, organized opposition, and ultimately the electoral removal of the board chair.

The question for the project's governance framework is not whether these officials violated the law; the Commonwealth's Attorney addressed that question in both cases and reached different conclusions. The question is whether disclosure-and-recusal rules built for ordinary municipal business can maintain public confidence when the stakes are billions of dollars in assessed value and thousands of acres of irreversible land conversion.

Prince William's answer, delivered at the ballot box in June and November 2023, was no.

PART FIVE: THE DEMOCRATIC CORRECTION

Prince William County is the only jurisdiction in the national data center debate where the electoral system produced a direct, traceable consequence for governance capture. Henrico's regulatory reversal was driven by community organizing that pressured an existing board to change course. Hanover's refusal came from a board whose composition never changed. In Prince William, the voters fired the board chair. They did it in a primary, which is the hardest way to do it, because the challenger had to beat an incumbent within her own party before facing the general electorate. There was nothing ambiguous about the issue that drove the upset: data centers.

The June 20, 2023 Democratic Primary

The Democratic primary for Board of Supervisors Chair pitted incumbent Ann Wheeler against Deshundra Jefferson, a political newcomer who had not previously held elected office. No other candidates appeared on the Democratic ballot.[107]

Jefferson's platform was explicit. She ran on curbing unchecked data center approvals, raising the industry tax rate to $3.70 per $100 of assessed value, and restoring the Rural Crescent's planning protections.[108] The campaign was not coded or cautious. Jefferson named the Digital Gateway as the problem and the board's approval process as the mechanism that had failed. Her campaign literature and public statements tied the governance failures documented in Part Four directly to the need for new leadership.

Wheeler entered the primary with structural advantages that ordinarily determine outcomes in local races. She was the incumbent chair with four years of name recognition. She had the support of the county's Democratic establishment. She had money. In the first quarter of 2023, Wheeler raised $131,908 against Jefferson's $36,992, a ratio of roughly three-and-a-half to one.[109] Wheeler's donor base included labor unions and contributors connected to the development community. Jefferson's early fundraising came largely from small-dollar donors and anti-data-center activists.

The result was not close enough to attribute to turnout variation or name confusion. Jefferson won 13,496 votes to Wheeler's 12,231, a margin of 52.46 percent to 47.54 percent.[110] The AP's Matthew Barakat characterized the result two days later as a "backlash to data centers" that "prompts political upset in Northern Virginia."[111] Antonio Olivo's coverage in the Washington Post framed it identically.[112] Local outlets, including DCist/WAMU, the Prince William Times, and InsideNoVa, all placed data centers at the center of their explanations for Wheeler's loss. Blue Virginia, which tracks Democratic primary politics statewide,

had flagged the fundraising disparity earlier that spring and treated Jefferson's victory as an indicator of grassroots energy that the establishment had failed to read.[113]

The analytical significance runs past the bare fact that Wheeler lost: she lost on a specific issue that she had championed, to a challenger who ran against that issue, after outspending the challenger by a wide margin in the early phase. In local politics, where incumbency and fundraising advantages are typically decisive, the result was an unmistakable signal. The voters of the Democratic primary electorate concluded that the Digital Gateway, and the governance that had produced it, was reason enough to replace the county's highest elected official.

The Cross-Partisan Alignment

The November 2023 general election produced a result that is, in the context of Virginia's partisan geography, remarkable.

On the Republican side, Jeanine Lawson had been one of the most vocal critics of the Digital Gateway on the Board of Supervisors. She voted no on both the CPA and the rezonings. She held the press conference in September 2023 that called for investigation of Candland's post-resignation lobbying. She secured the Republican nomination for Board Chair without significant opposition.

The general election for Board Chair was therefore Jefferson versus Lawson, Democrat versus Republican, and both candidates ran on platforms skeptical of data center expansion.[114] This was not a typical partisan alignment. In most Virginia jurisdictions, data center policy does not cleave along party lines; the industry has supporters and opponents in both parties, and the fiscal argument for welcoming data centers is made as readily by Republican tax-cutters as by Democratic budget-expanders. In Prince William, the 2023 election produced a rare convergence: both major-party nominees for the county's top office agreed that the data center approval process had failed and that the incoming board needed to change course.

Jefferson won the general election on November 7, 2023, with 62,267 votes to Lawson's 57,740, 51.70 percent to 47.94, a margin of 4,527 votes in the certified count.[115] The new board was seated in January 2024. The composition included Jefferson as chair, several new members elected on reform platforms, and Republican holdovers including Yesli Vega in the Coles District. The cross-partisan mandate was clear: the voters had replaced the governing majority that approved the Digital Gateway, and they had done so through candidates of both parties who agreed on the central issue.

What the New Board Did

The Jefferson board moved quickly on the fiscal lever that was within its immediate control, and then kept moving.

On April 18, 2024, by a vote of 7-1, the board raised the data center computer equipment tax rate from $2.15 to $3.70 per $100 of assessed value, the largest single increase in the rate's history.[116] In April 2025 it raised the rate again, to $4.15, and in April 2026, to $4.50, a level that took Prince William past Loudoun County's $4.15.[117] Part Six documents the full rate history and the revenue it produces. The governance significance is this: the board that replaced Wheeler did what Jefferson said it would do, and then did it twice more. The rate increase was the platform promise, executed within four months of taking office and compounded in each budget since.

On land-use decisions, the new board's record is more mixed, and the mix is the subject of Part Seven. The short version: the board approved the Mid-County Industrial Park in June 2024 over a unanimous Planning Commission recommendation of denial.[118] In September 2025 it denied the Bristow Data Center Campus, a Stack Infrastructure project of roughly 540,000 square feet on Nokesville Road, what the Prince William Times reported as the first time the board had denied a rezoning to expand a data center campus outside the area designated for them.[119] In March 2026 it approved another data center outside the overlay district on a 4-3 vote while simultaneously initiating a zoning text amendment aimed at by-right data center development in the overlay; a revised text, adopted September 22, 2026, narrowed by-right development there rather than ending it (Part Nine).[120] The board has not adopted a moratorium. It has adopted a posture of selective scrutiny that the previous board never exercised, and the selectivity itself, who gets approved, who gets denied, and what money moves around those decisions, is where the post-correction story gets complicated.

The Board the Correction Built, Revised by Events

The board seated in January 2024 did not stay intact. Bob Weir's death in July 2025 vacated the Gainesville seat; Democrat George Stewart won the November 4, 2025 special election with 50.47 percent over Republican Patrick Harders, campaigning against the "unchecked spread of data centers," and his swearing-in gave Democrats a 6-2 majority on the board.[121] Two months later, Woodbridge Supervisor Margaret Franklin, one of the four Democrats who voted for the Digital Gateway rezonings, won a January 13, 2026 special election to the House of Delegates; Republican Jeannie LaCroix took her Woodbridge seat in a March 10, 2026 upset, and the board settled at 5-3.[122] By spring 2026, four members of the board that approved the Digital Gateway remained: Bailey and Angry, who voted for the

rezonings; Boddye, who abstained; and Vega, the lone surviving no vote. The board that decided not to defend the project in April 2026 was, in majority, a board the project's politics had created.

The Cost of the Correction

The Purpose and Scope of this case study promised an accounting of what the correction cost, and the record permits a full catalog.

The correction required two recall campaigns: one that validated more signatures than its 1,796-signature threshold required before resignation mooted it, and one that organizers reported took nearly 12,000 signatures toward an 11,209-signature countywide threshold before being redirected into the primary. It required a primary challenge that began with $36,992 in first-quarter fundraising against an incumbent's $131,908. It required a general election. It required two separate litigation tracks pursued across four years and three levels of the Virginia court system, one of which failed completely, and the second of which succeeded only on procedural grounds. It required citizens to testify through a fourteen-hour hearing and then a twenty-seven-hour hearing, through the night, to a board whose majority had already decided. And it imposed costs on the county itself: roughly $1.7 million in public money spent defending the lame-duck approvals against the county's own residents before the new board ended the defense in April 2026.[123] The aggregate private cost, in money, volunteer hours, and civic capacity, is not quantifiable from the public record. It was substantial, and the affluent, educated, well-lawyered character of the community that paid it is part of the finding. The distributional question is what happens in a county that lacks those resources. This series documents at least one answer: in Henrico's Varina District, the burden landed first and the organizing came harder.

The Mechanisms That Did Not Work

The ballot box was not the only mechanism available. The record assembled in Part Four shows that other mechanisms existed; the precise finding is that each one failed, declined to act, or was never built to reach the conduct in question.

The Commonwealth's Attorney could compel Candland's recusal, and did, but the COIA framework gave her no comparable hold on portfolio-level investments, and she cleared Wheeler. The State Police preliminary inquiry into the post-resignation lobbying found no violation of a county ordinance whose scope excludes matters arising after an official leaves office. The county had adopted the strongest revolving-door ordinance state law allowed, in 1991, and the conduct ran through its gaps. The General Assembly could have strengthened the Conflict of Interests Act for exactly this situation; it has not, and its 2026 data center session, documented in

Part Ten, addressed siting and disclosure but not local-official conflicts. The planning staff did its job twice and was overruled twice. Other mechanisms existed on paper. The ballot box was the one that worked, and even then, the lame-duck window let the outgoing board approve the project after the voters had spoken, which meant the correction's final instrument had to be the courts, on grounds that had nothing to do with the conflicts.

The National Significance

No other jurisdiction in the United States has produced this sequence. In Loudoun County, where data centers generate 31 percent of total county revenue, no board chair has been unseated over the issue. In Henrico, the regulatory reversal was accomplished without changing the board's membership. In Hanover, the refusal came from a board whose members kept their seats.

Prince William is the case where the democratic feedback loop produced a traceable result. A board chair with financial entanglements in the industry she was approving was defeated in a primary by a challenger who named the industry as the problem. The challenger won the general election. The new board raised the tax rate three times. The courts voided the lame-duck approvals, and the new board declined to defend them. On July 2, 2026, the last developer withdrew the last petition. The sequence from governance capture to democratic correction to judicial confirmation is complete. What that completion means should be stated precisely. The Digital Gateway as entitled in December 2023 is void ab initio, and the appeals are exhausted; no court will ever reach the merits. The ruling does not make data centers on Pageland Lane impossible. The comprehensive plan amendment survived its separate challenge and still designates the corridor, and nothing in void-ab-initio doctrine bars a future board from entertaining a new, properly noticed application. What is dead is specific, and durably so: the 2023 approvals, the zoning litigation they produced, and the proposition that a repudiated board could entitle 1,760 acres in its final month and make it stick. The correction held because each institution finished its part. The voters replaced the board. The new board declined to redo or defend the work. And the developer, facing a writ panel in September and a merits decision in mid-2027 at the earliest, stopped paying for the litigation Weir promised the approvals would buy.

For the project's analytical framework, the Prince William case answers a question the other case studies cannot: what does it take to correct governance capture through democratic institutions? The answer is everything at once. The correction needed a recall campaign to force the issue into the primary, a challenger willing to make the industry the central issue, and an electorate angry enough to replace a well-funded incumbent. It needed a general election in which both parties' nominees

agreed on the problem. Because the outgoing board used its final weeks to approve the contested projects anyway, it then needed a successful lawsuit. Whether the bar is simply too high for communities without Prince William's affluence, education, and civic infrastructure is a distributional justice question this case study leaves open. What this case study can say is that nothing short of the full sequence was sufficient here.

PART SIX: THE FISCAL RECORD

The board the correction produced inherited more than a governance mess. It inherited the fastest-growing revenue machine in county government, and every decision documented in Parts Five and Seven happens against the hum of that machine. The fiscal argument for data centers in Prince William County was always the same argument: commercial tax revenue that offsets the residential property tax burden. The argument was not wrong. What it omitted was the price.

The Tax Rate History, and a Correction for the Record

For nearly two decades, Prince William County taxed data center computer equipment at $1.25 per $100 of assessed value, a rate set around 2001 and frozen there through 2019. The rate was low by design. It was part of the competitive positioning that made Prince William attractive to an industry that could site anywhere in Northern Virginia, and it reflected a period when the county was courting data centers rather than managing them.[124]

A historical note that no one in Prince William likes to mention: before the county began courting data centers, the computer equipment rate was $3.70 per $100. That was the rate in place before 1999, when the board slashed it to attract the industry.[125] Everything that followed, including the Jefferson board's celebrated 2024 increase "to" $3.70, was a return trip.

The rate history after 2019 tells the story of a county waking up to what it had underpriced. In Tax Year 2020, the board raised the rate to $1.35. In Tax Year 2021, to $1.50. In Tax Year 2022, to $1.65. In Tax Year 2023, to $2.15. The first three increases were incremental, ten or fifteen cents at a time, the kind of adjustment that signals discomfort without disrupting the competitive calculus; the fourth, for Tax Year 2023, was fifty cents. These increases were adopted by the pre-2024 board, the same board that was simultaneously processing the Digital Gateway.[126]

Then the new board arrived, and the increments ended. The full sequence, stated precisely because inconsistent versions of it have circulated:

Tax Year	Funds Fiscal Year	Rate per $100	Adopted	Vote
2023	FY2024	$2.15	spring 2023	pre-correction board
2024	FY2025	$3.70	April 18, 2024	7-1
2025	FY2026	$4.15	April 22, 2025	7-1 on the personal property levies, Vega dissenting
2026	FY2027	$4.50	April 21, 2026	5-3, the three Republicans opposed

Each rate is a calendar-year (tax year) rate adopted in April alongside the budget for the fiscal year beginning that July. The $4.50 rate adopted on April 21, 2026 applies to tax year 2026 assessments and funds FY2027.[127] Loudoun County's comparable rate is $4.15, unchanged through tax year 2027, which means Prince William, the county that spent two decades as Northern Virginia's discount jurisdiction, now taxes data center equipment at a higher rate than Loudoun.[128]

A note for readers of the companion reports, because a rate discrepancy has propagated through the series and this case study is the right place to retire it. Reports and press accounts carrying $3.70 as Prince William's current rate are citing the tax year 2024 rate, stale since April 2025. Accounts carrying $4.15 were correct for tax year 2025 and are stale since April 21, 2026. Accounts pairing Loudoun at $4.25 rest on no located primary document; the verified Loudoun figure is $4.15. As of this writing the operative comparison is Prince William $4.50, Loudoun $4.15, Henrico $2.60, stated as tax-year 2026 rates.[128]

The Revenue

The revenue trajectory is steep. The county's TY2023 Data Center Tax Revenue Report shows total data center tax revenue growing from $6.5 million in Tax Year 2012 to $166.4 million in Tax Year 2023.[129] The 2024 Data Center Revenue Report, published in June 2025, shows the total reaching $293.7 million for Tax Year 2024, a 77 percent increase over the prior year. The breakdown: $144.2 million in real property tax, $147.1 million in business tangible personal property, of which $123.9 million from computer equipment and peripherals and $23.2 million from furniture and fixtures, with the balance in fees and licensing. The county attributes $51.9 million of the one-year gain to the rate increase itself. Earlier reporting carried a preliminary figure near $280 million; the final report figure is $293.7 million, and that is the number this series uses.[130] The Tax Year 2025 report, posted in July 2026, carries the total to $465.9 million, up 59 percent in a year: $221.8 million in real property tax, $218.1 million from computer equipment and peripherals, $23.3 million from furniture and fixtures, and $2.7 million in fees and licensing.[131] The

county’s reports state the full series, and it deserves a table rather than a narrative splice:

Tax year	Total ($M)	Change
2012	6.5	
2013	7.8	+21%
2014	11.7	+50%
2015	17.4	+48%
2016	22.9	+32%
2017	27.9	+22%
2018	36.7	+31%
2019	53.3	+45%
2020	65.4	+23%
2021	85.9	+31%
2022	110.8	+29%
2023	166.4	+50%
2024	293.7	+77%
2025	465.9	+59%

The 2024 report records what the growth means inside the county’s commercial tax base: data centers accounted for 92.4 percent of all commercial real estate growth and appreciation in the county and stood at 49 percent of commercial assessments; the 2025 report puts the growth share at 92.3 percent.[130][131]

The dependence question has moved fast. The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission’s (JLARC) December 2024 statewide report placed Prince William’s data center revenue at approximately 7 percent of total county revenue, against Loudoun’s 31 percent, using revenue figures that predated the rate increases and the 2024 assessment surge.[132] By the time the county executive presented the proposed FY2027 budget in February 2026, the presentation materials described data center revenue growing 953 percent between fiscal 2020 and fiscal 2027, from $52.2 million to an estimated $550 million.[133] The presentation’s own forecast table puts the FY2027 figure at $549.7 million, the sum of $274.4 million in data center real estate revenue, $250.9 million from computer equipment and peripherals, and $24.4 million from furniture and fixtures, and describes it as approximately 28 percent of the proposed total general revenue forecast of $1.955 billion.[134] Those figures were computed at the proposed rates; the adopted budget

cut the real estate rate to $0.865 and raised the equipment rate to $4.50, and the adopted FY2027 budget document states no data center revenue total at the adopted rates, on a text search of that document on November 24, 2026.[135] The JLARC and county percentages also use different denominators, total county revenue against general revenue, and the case study flags the distinction rather than splicing them into a single trend line. The direction is not in doubt. On any consistent measure, Prince William's fiscal dependence on this industry has multiplied since the democratic correction, not despite the correction but partly because of it: the new board's rate increases converted the same installed base into much more revenue.

The FY2026 budget, adopted in April 2025, projected $18 million in additional data center revenue from the move to $4.15, and carried a $1 million contribution to a Data Center Revenue Stabilization Fund, a hedge line that first appeared in the FY2025 budget and that the FY2027 budget, as proposed and as adopted, carries at zero.[136][135]*

What the FY2027 Budget Did With the Money

The FY2027 budget, adopted April 21, 2026, is the clearest statement yet of what the revenue is for. The board cut the real estate tax rate from $0.906 to $0.865 per $100, the first meaningful residential rate cut of the data center era, saving the average homeowner about $56 per year.[137] It raised the data center equipment rate to $4.50, projected to generate roughly $21.5 million in additional revenue, nearly the cost of the residential cut.[138]* The arithmetic was explicit in the board's deliberations: data center revenue pays for residential relief.

The adoption was not smooth, and the turbulence is analytically useful. At the April 14 markup, the board straw-voted a deeper residential cut to $0.85, a meals tax reduction to 2 percent, and a $31.2 million cut to the school transfer that would have broken the county's revenue-sharing arrangement with its school division. A week of public backlash followed, led by school advocates. On adoption night the board reversed: the meals tax stayed at 3 percent, the school transfer was restored to $1.115 billion, up 12.5 percent over FY2026, and the residential cut settled at $0.865.[137] Supervisors Vega and Stewart, from opposite parties, had spent the budget season arguing that more of the data center windfall should flow to resident tax relief.[133] The school division argued the windfall should fund schools. Nobody argued the windfall should be smaller. That is what fiscal dependence looks like in practice: the argument stops being about the industry and becomes an argument about dividing what the industry pays.

The Depreciation Schedule

Revenue sustainability depends not only on the tax rate but on the depreciation schedule that determines how quickly equipment loses taxable value. Prince William County assesses data center computer equipment as a percentage of original cost on a five-year curve:[139]

Year	Assessed share of original cost
1	50%
2	35%
3	20%
4	10%
5 and after	5% floor

Henrico County's Schedule 89, by comparison, reaches a 10 percent floor after four years. Prince William's schedule is more aggressive in favor of the industry: equipment loses taxable value faster, and the floor is half Henrico's. The effective tax on new equipment in tax year 2026 is $4.50 against a 50 percent assessment, about 2.25 percent of original cost in year one, eroding to roughly 0.23 percent of original cost from year five onward unless the operator refreshes the hardware.

The practical implication is the same one documented in the Henrico case study: the revenue from a data center campus is a function of ongoing operator investment, not a fixed asset. If an operator stops refreshing equipment, the taxable base declines on a predictable curve. The $218.1 million that computer equipment paid in TY2025 reflects the installed base at the $4.15 rate then in force. Maintaining the proposed FY2027 budget's $550 million projection requires continued equipment replacement, new facilities entering the tax rolls, or both, which is one reason a board elected to curb the industry keeps finding reasons to approve pieces of it. The stabilization reserve exists because the budget office understands the curve.

The Revenue Forgone

The Virginia data center sales tax exemption, codified at Virginia Code Section 58.1-609.3(18), exempts qualifying data center equipment purchases from the retail sales and use tax. JLARC's 2024 analysis reported the exemption cost the Commonwealth over $1 billion in forgone revenue in FY2024; by FY2025 the reported figure had grown to between $1.6 billion and $1.9 billion, the largest economic development incentive in state history.[140] The county-specific share is not isolated in published data, and the case study cannot quantify the sales tax revenue Prince William has forgone. The structural point stands regardless: the

county's $465.9 million in collected tax-year 2025 revenue coexists with a state policy that exempts the same industry from a tax every other commercial tenant pays. The county taxes the equipment's presence; the state subsidizes its purchase. Which ledger a reader consults determines whether Prince William looks like a county that finally priced the industry correctly or a county collecting local rent on a state giveaway.

That second ledger drove the Commonwealth to the brink of shutdown before the budget signed June 30, 2026 preserved the exemption and taxed the industry's electricity instead, documented in Part Ten, and Prince William's experience, the high rate, the revenue dependence, the correction that did not slow the buildout, was cited on both sides of the fight.

The Infrastructure Costs

Data center development imposes infrastructure costs on the host jurisdiction: roads, water and sewer capacity, planning staff time, power coordination with Dominion Energy, and the ongoing administrative burden of managing an industrial sector that operates at a scale the county's planning framework was not designed for. These costs are documented in county budget narratives but are not aggregated in a single line item.[141] The BAE Urban Economics market study noted that planning staff capacity was already strained by the volume of data center applications before the Digital Gateway was filed.[142] The 2022 PFM Fiscal Impact Analysis, commissioned by the county, concluded that data centers produced a net-positive fiscal impact under the existing framework; that analysis preceded four rate increases and the litigation bill, and no comparable study has been published since.[143]

The comparison to Loudoun is instructive but imperfect. Loudoun's 31 percent revenue share means that data center revenue is a structural pillar of the county budget; a significant decline would require either service cuts or tax increases on other sectors. Prince William's dependence was 7 percent on JLARC's pre-surge measure and is approaching something much larger on the county's own FY2027 figures. The question is not whether Prince William is in the trap but how far in, and how fast it is still moving. A county whose budget headlines celebrate a residential tax cut funded by data center revenue has answered the directional part of that question already.

The Employment Picture

The fiscal argument for data centers rests on revenue. The employment argument is thinner, and the gap between them is the labor finding. JLARC's December 2024 report found that Virginia's data centers produce fewer than 2,000 direct permanent

jobs statewide, a number that has not kept pace with the industry's explosive growth in assessed value.[144] The BAE prototype analysis projected 28 permanent full-time jobs per 250,000-square-foot data center, with approximately 1,700 construction jobs during the twelve-month build phase.[145] The construction employment is real and recurring at the county's current build rate, fifteen facilities under construction as of mid-2025, but it is cyclical, travels with the contractor, and ends when the shell is energized. The permanent operational workforce is small. A 250,000-square-foot data center employs fewer permanent workers than a mid-sized restaurant. For the energy, labor, and infrastructure framework, the relevant Prince William fact is that the fiscal case is built entirely on assessed value, not payroll, and the community's ongoing relationship with each facility is defined by noise, water, and load, not by the number of neighbors who work there. QTS's petition to the Supreme Court of Virginia argued the voided project would have brought "thousands of jobs" to Virginia; the county's own consultant arithmetic for permanent employment at 22.2 million square feet supports a figure in the low thousands at full buildout, with the bulk of the employment effect confined to the construction decade.[66]

PART SEVEN: THE GOVERNANCE TRAP IN PRACTICE

The Virginia report, What Virginia Is Spending, What Virginia Is Getting, describes the governance trap in abstract terms: dependence on a narrow revenue stream changes how a locality governs. Skepticism weakens and enforcement softens, and the next project becomes harder to challenge. The officials who approve the first project develop institutional and sometimes personal stakes in the industry's continued growth. The planning staff who recommended denial the first time learn that the board will overrule them. The community that organized against the first project discovers that the second project arrives with more money, more political cover, and a precedent that the first approval created.

Prince William provides the concrete evidence. The pattern documented in Parts Two through Five is not hypothetical. It happened. The question this Part addresses is whether the democratic correction documented in Part Five broke the pattern, or whether the pattern has continued under the new board through different actors and different projects. The record supports neither a clean redemption story nor a clean relapse story, and this case study declines to manufacture either.

The Vega Contribution

Yesli Vega represents the Coles District on the Prince William County Board of Supervisors. She was first elected in 2019 and re-elected in November 2023; she served on both the pre-2024 board and the post-correction board. She is a Republican. She voted against the Digital Gateway rezonings on December 13, 2023.[146] On that vote, she stood with the community opposition. She is not part of the governance capture documented in Part Four.

What happened next is a separate story.

On June 4, 2024, the Board of Supervisors approved the Mid-County Industrial Park rezoning, REZ2024-00006, a roughly 64-acre data center project at Dumfries and Minnieville roads, by a vote of 5-3. The Planning Commission had unanimously recommended denial on April 24, 2024. Vega voted in favor, joining four Democrats; had she voted no, the application would have failed on a 4-4 tie.[147]

In December 2024, a political action committee called YES PAC was established. Its Statement of Organization, filed with the Virginia Department of Elections as committee ID PAC-24-00062 with an activity date of December 16, 2024, lists Vega's home address as the committee's mailing address and, per InsideNoVa's review of the filing, names her county-paid chief of staff, Chelsea Quintern, as treasurer and principal custodian of the books; Vega is the committee's founder and director.[148]

On March 28, 2025, YES PAC received a $100,000 contribution from Alejandra Duarte Mulhausen of McLean, Virginia.[149] Duarte Mulhausen is the wife of Jeff Mulhausen, a data center developer whose company, Minnieville Capital Acquisitions, was the applicant for the Mid-County Industrial Park, the project Vega had voted to approve nine months earlier.[150] The Prince William Times called it "likely the largest single contribution to any supervisor from an individual in the county's history," noting that the largest single-donor contributions in county supervisor races typically run about $10,000.[151]

It was not the only six-figure check. On July 3, 2025, YES PAC received a second $100,000 contribution, from William O. Cooley, a West Palm Beach-based developer who owns one of the parcels behind a proposed data center project near the Four Seasons retirement community in Dumfries, in Vega's end of the county. Cooley's giving was not confined to Vega: an entity he owns, Atlantic Funding, gave $10,000 to Supervisor Victor Angry, and Cooley gave $25,000 to Attorney General Jason Miyares's campaign.[152] Pete Candland, the former supervisor who resigned under the Digital Gateway conflict-of-interest ruling and joined LSI Communications, contributed $500 to YES PAC in the same period.[153]

The reporting identified the social connective tissue. The Prince William Times and InsideNoVa, both publishing in early May 2025, reported that the Cedrus Group, Mulhausen's company, was the $15,000 Platinum sponsor of the county Republican Committee's Lincoln-Reagan Dinner on May 3, 2025, and photographs provided by a local activist showed Vega at the head table with Jeff Mulhausen and land-use attorney Mark Looney.[154] Vega's on-record response to the coverage denied that donors influence her votes.[152]

By the PAC's June 2026 filings, YES PAC had raised $333,124 since inception and held $248,818 in cash, with later large contributions including $50,000 received April 20, 2026 from Redwood Condo Investors 25 LLC, a Centreville entity associated with the Redwood Commercial real estate organization; no published reporting or located county record ties the entity to specific Prince William land or data center business.[155] InsideNoVa reported in August 2026 that YES PAC received $50,000 on June 28, 2026 from developer Chuck Kuhn, whose JK Land Holdings that month renewed its pitch for five data centers on the 82-acre Gardner property in Gainesville.[156]

The Chronological Sequence

The sequence matters, and the case study states it precisely rather than letting implication do the work.

Vega voted in favor of the Mid-County Industrial Park on June 4, 2024. The YES PAC was established in December 2024. The $100,000 contribution from Duarte Mulhausen was received on March 28, 2025, nine months after the vote. The contribution followed the vote. It did not precede it.[157]

The case study does not characterize the contribution as a quid pro quo. The public record does not support that characterization, and the chronology works against it: the money came after the decision, not before. What the record does support is a pattern: a developer whose project was approved by the board subsequently made what the county's paper of record called likely the largest individual contribution to any supervisor in county history, to a supervisor who cast a vote the project could not have passed without, through a PAC whose original organizational statement named that supervisor's county-paid chief of staff as treasurer. Whether that pattern reflects gratitude, investment in future access, or coincidence is a question the case study raises and the reader can assess. The facts are on the record. So is the silence around them: as of June 12, 2026, no recall petition, ethics complaint, Conflict of Interests Act opinion, or investigation concerning the PAC or the chief-of-staff arrangement appears in any published source. The treasurer record itself has a history. The original Statement of Organization named the chief of staff, Chelsea Quintern; an amendment effective October 6, 2025 replaced her with Marina Santos of Manassas, and the committee reported a payment to Quintern that same month. The filing designates the committee for statewide and General Assembly elections; the box for local elections is unchecked.[158]

The Money Spread

The Vega PAC is the largest object in the post-correction money picture, but it is not alone. In February 2026 the Prince William Times totaled the second-half 2025 campaign finance reports: the county's supervisors and Vega's PAC collected $297,741 between July 1 and December 31, 2025, of which $199,495, two-thirds, came from data center interests. The county's supervisors out-raised their Fairfax County counterparts from the industry and took in roughly seventeen times what Loudoun's board did.[159]

The distribution is the analytically interesting part. Vega's committees accounted for $111,500 from data center interests, plus $15,000 to her campaign committee from Keith Harney of CloudHQ. Supervisor Kenny Boddye, the Digital Gateway abstention, took $40,500, including $20,000 from JK Land Holdings and $20,000 from the Cedrus Group, which brokered the original Four Seasons-area pitch. Supervisor Angry took roughly $16,500. Supervisor Bailey took $14,000, most of it from a PAC whose treasurer's day job at Amazon prompted a later clarification that the money originated with a commercial developer. Chair Jefferson took $1,000.

Supervisors Gordy and Stewart took nothing from the industry.[159] Candland appears as a donor, in amounts of $500 to $1,000, on three supervisors' reports. The board that moved against the by-right era and taxes data center equipment above Loudoun's rate is also, measured in campaign dollars, more industry-funded than either Fairfax's or Loudoun's board.

The money has not flowed only toward officials. It has also flowed against them. In September 2025, Atlantic Funding, the Cooley entity behind the Four Seasons-area project, sued Chair Jefferson in federal court over statements at her community town halls; Jefferson called the suit "an intimidation action," and the developer voluntarily dismissed it a month later, citing Cooley's health.[160] A sitting board chair was, for a month, a defendant in a developer's defamation suit over the act of holding town halls about data centers. The suit produced no ruling and set no precedent. As an instrument of pressure, it did not need to.

The Complication

If the post-correction record ended with the PAC, the pattern would read as relapse. It does not end there, and the case study is obligated to document the rest.

Vega voted against the Hornbaker Road data center on March 3, 2026, dissenting alongside Jefferson and Stewart while the board's other Democrats and Republican Gordy approved it 4-3.[161] She voted against the FY2027 budget and its tax rates. Through the spring 2026 budget season she argued, with Democrat Stewart, that more of the data center revenue should fund residential tax relief.[133] She joined the unanimous April 14, 2026 vote to end the county's defense of the Digital Gateway rezonings.[63] Her PAC's donors include the industry's most active county developers; her recent land-use votes include refusals the industry opposed. Both facts are true at once. The first announced challenger for her seat, School Board member Lisa Zargarpur, declared in May 2026 for the November 2027 election, in which all eight board seats are up.[162] Vega told InsideNoVa in August 2026 that she would decide about 2027 "probably later in the fall."[156] Whether Coles District voters read the record as independence or as capture is a question the 2027 election will answer and this case study will not.

The institutional behavior framework's question, whether democratic correction is durable or cyclical, gets its sharpest test here, and the honest answer from Prince William is that the record is mixed: the corrected board denies more and taxes more than the board it replaced, while the financial relationship between the industry and the county's elected officials has grown larger and more routine than anything documented in the pre-correction era. The correction changed the personnel and some of the outputs. It did not change the incentive structure, which is the trap's load-bearing component.

The Resident Apparatus, Disbanded

One additional element of the post-correction record deserves documentation, because it bears directly on whether the correction institutionalized community voice or merely changed who holds the gavel.

In October 2025, on a directive from Supervisor Angry, the board voted 4-2 to disband the resident-led Data Center Ordinance Advisory Group it had created to draft new data center rules. A participant called the move “a gut punch.” Chair Jefferson, on the losing side, framed it in one line: “We listen to industry, but we don’t want to listen to residents?”[163] Three weeks later the board adopted a compromise noise ordinance authored by Supervisor Boddye on a 5-2 vote, Jefferson and Vega dissenting, using C-weighted measurement rather than the octave-band standard the advisory group had recommended; Supervisor Gordy attached a one-year effectiveness review, due in fall 2026.[164] The ordinance took effect on May 1, 2026. On October 20, 2026, Public Works and the Police Department told the board that Public Works, which enforces the ordinance’s steady tonal noise standard, had logged 19 resident complaints from May through September, that none exceeded the ordinance’s 73-decibel daytime or 68-decibel nighttime thresholds, and that no violation had been issued; six months into enforcement, they recommended returning “in the late Spring of 2027” with a year of data before judging the ordinance’s effectiveness.[165] The board that owed its majority to a citizens’ revolt dissolved the citizens’ working group and passed the softer standard over its own chair’s objection. The override pattern documented below did not begin with this board, but this board has added its own entries.

Planning Staff and the Pattern of Override

County planning staff recommended denial of the Digital Gateway at both stages: the CPA in 2022 and the rezonings in 2023, when the Planning Commission joined them. The Planning Commission recommended denial of the Mid-County Industrial Park in April 2024. In all three instances, the board overruled the professional recommendation and approved the project. The pattern is not unique to Prince William; boards overrule planning staff everywhere, and the power to do so is inherent in the board’s legislative authority. What makes the pattern analytically significant here is its persistence across two different boards, pre- and post-correction, on projects involving the same industry. The board elected to change the county’s data center governance overruled its own Planning Commission on a data center project within six months of taking office, and the supervisor who cast the deciding vote later received, from the applicant’s family, what the Prince William Times called likely the largest contribution from an individual to any supervisor in county history. The override does not prove capture. It demonstrates that the

correction did not relocate the decision away from the place where the money concentrates: five votes on a dais. On July 7, 2026, after the evidence snapshot, the board followed staff and declined to initiate the Sanders Lane amendment (Part Four).

PART EIGHT: TRANSMISSION AND THE RATEPAYER

Weir's arithmetic from the dais, that the power had to come from somewhere and the cost of moving it would land on ratepayers, was a forecast. The dockets have since filled in the numbers. This Part documents the infrastructure record the county's revenue reports do not capture, in the same frame the companion Hanover study uses: the county collects the tax revenue; the ratepayers, across Dominion's entire service territory, finance the infrastructure that makes the revenue possible.

The Wires

The corridor's flagship project is Dominion's Morrisville to Wishing Star line: a new 500 kV circuit along roughly 36.5 miles of existing right-of-way from southern Fauquier County through Prince William to a substation near Dulles, with an associated 230 kV line and substation expansion, which Dominion's project materials present as serving data center load growth in Prince William and Loudoun. Dominion filed its certificate application with the State Corporation Commission on February 27, 2026, docketed as Case No. PUR-2026-00021.[166] A Hearing Examiner's ruling of June 29, 2026 moved the evidentiary hearing from October 7 to November 16, 2026 and kept the published public witness date; the public witness hearing was held on September 30.[167] On October 28 the Senior Hearing Examiner, M. Renae Carter, struck the parts of testimony from Fauquier County, the American Battlefield Trust, the Piedmont Environmental Council and two homeowners associations that asked for the line's cost to be allocated to large-load customers, citing the Commission's practice of not deciding cost allocation in certificate cases and a public notice that did not tell those customers allocation was at issue, and left in testimony on the line's need, the load growth driving it, and its routing. Rulings of November 6 and 12 recorded that several witnesses had been stipulated or excused and that the hearing would likely run shorter than the seven days reserved. As of November 24, 2026 no filing after November 13 appears on the docket, and no Hearing Examiner's report has issued.[168] The route runs through approximately two miles of National Park Service land along the western boundary of Manassas National Battlefield Park, widening the existing corridor by more than 100 feet and affecting roughly 25 acres of park land near Brawner Farm. The National Parks Conservation Association, the Piedmont Environmental Council, and the Coalition to Protect America's National Parks have demanded a full environmental impact statement and historic preservation review; a sitting congressman has formally requested National Park Service review of the crossing.[169] Dominion has stated the line is needed regardless of the Digital Gateway's fate, and its sworn testimony goes further. Its transmission planner told the Commission that projected Digital Gateway load had not been in the models when PJM, the regional grid operator, and the company

identified the need, that none of the power flow cases behind the application included it, and that the reliability violations the line addresses arise in the 2027-2028 timeframe whatever happens to future data center development. Fauquier County's witness argued the reverse, that the Gateway's withdrawal displaced several gigawatts of contracted demand. The Commission has made no finding.[19] On the company's own account, the line was never sized to the project the courts voided; its witness describes the need as system-wide, a 500 kV backbone serving all of the company's customers rather than one class of them.

The regional buildout is larger still. PJM opened a transmission expansion window in 2022 specifically for Northern Virginia data center load, attributing more than 85 percent of Dominion-zone load growth to data centers.[170] In February 2025, PJM's board approved $5.9 billion in new transmission, including a multistate 765 kV backbone to be built by a Dominion, AEP, and FirstEnergy joint venture, with a Virginia certificate filing then expected in summer 2026; a subsequent PJM plan approved $11.8 billion more, roughly $4.8 billion of it in the Dominion zone.[171] As of October 8, 2026, the SCC's case index carried no certificate case naming the line.[172] These are everyone's bills: the costs are allocated through transmission rates that all customers pay. Grid facilities also pass through the county's own permits: on September 22, 2026, the board unanimously denied Special Use Permit SUP2025-00009, the Vint Hill Substation in the Brentsville District.[173]

The Rate Class and the Queue

The State Corporation Commission's answer to the cost-allocation problem arrived on November 25, 2025, in the final order of Dominion's biennial review, Case No. PUR-2025-00058. The Commission created a new rate class, GS-5, for customers with demand at or above 25 megawatts, effective January 1, 2027, with terms designed to stop data center costs from migrating to everyone else: mandatory 14-year contract terms, minimum demand charges of 85 percent of contracted distribution and transmission demand and 60 percent of contracted generation demand, and three years' notice to reduce contracted load.[174] In the same order the Commission rejected most of Dominion's requested base-rate increases, approving $565.7 million and $209.9 million against requests of $822 million and $345 million, with an average residential bill impact of $11.24 per month in 2026.[174] On July 31, 2026, the Commission's final order on Dominion's Rider T1 directed the company to file an amended line extension policy requiring a mandatory contribution in aid of construction for "direct connect" transmission facilities serving new or expanding large-load customers, prospectively, and said it may consider in that new docket assigning higher-order transmission costs directly to the GS-5 class.[175]

The scale of what GS-5 is meant to discipline emerged in a Dominion compliance filing two months after the GS-5 order. The utility's large-load interconnection queue, the data center projects asking to connect, stood at approximately 70 gigawatts as of December 31, 2025.[176] Dominion's 2025 integrated resource plan projects its load doubling by 2039, the fastest growth since the Second World War, with the data center forecast revised upward 17 percent over the prior plan and transmission capital impacts estimated at $28.3 billion; the company's data center capacity under contract roughly doubled in a year, to 40 gigawatts.[177] The first new gas plant approved in Virginia since the Clean Economy Act, a 944-megawatt, $1.47 billion peaker in Chesterfield County, was certificated the same day as the GS-5 order, on a record that cited data center demand.[178]

What the Ratepayer Pays

JLARC's December 2024 study put a number on the trajectory: under the unconstrained-demand scenario, generation and transmission costs attributable to data center growth could add an estimated $14 to $37 per month, in constant dollars, to a typical Dominion residential bill by 2040. The upper bound is roughly $444 per year.[179] The finding is the analytical hinge of the utility finance framework across this series, and Prince William is its sharpest illustration: the county collected $465.9 million in data center tax revenue in tax year 2025 and cut its residential real estate rate, while the residential electricity customer, in Prince William and in three hundred other Virginia localities that host no data centers, pays for the transmission and generation that serve the load. The capacity market has already started: PJM's capacity auction for the 2025-26 delivery year cleared 1,436 percent above the prior year in the Dominion zone, with the Dominion zone at $444.26 per megawatt-day, and PJM's independent market monitor attributed 63 percent of the increase, roughly $9.3 billion, to data centers, including billions tied to facilities not yet built.[180] In May 2026 the General Assembly's first structural response was signed into law, effective July 1: legislation directing the Commission to shift PJM capacity auction costs and data-center-driven distribution and substation costs onto the large loads that cause them, documented with the rest of the 2026 session in Part Ten.[181]

The Watershed

The water record runs parallel. The Occoquan Reservoir serves roughly 800,000 people; the Digital Gateway site drains toward it; and the inter-basin loop documented in Part One, Potomac water in, UOSA discharge out, adds what the regional monitoring program describes as a relatively constant high-sodium flow whose effects concentrate in summer low-dilution conditions. Fairfax Water has reported that salt levels in the Occoquan have begun routinely to exceed federal

taste and low-sodium advisory levels, and the Occoquan Watershed Monitoring Laboratory is studying the trend.[182] The Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin reported Northern Virginia data centers consumed approximately 2 billion gallons in 2023, up 63 percent from 2019.[183] A December 2025 regional study flagged future vulnerabilities in the Washington area's water supply as demand grows.[184] On September 22, 2026, the board unanimously petitioned the Governor and the Department of Environmental Quality to include mid-county and western Prince William in regional groundwater studies and future groundwater management frameworks.[173] No 2025-2026 monitoring report isolates data-center-attributable sediment loading in the Occoquan; the 57,000-ton runoff estimate from the Digital Gateway fight remains an advocacy projection rather than a measured outcome, and Part Twelve lists the monitoring records that would settle it.[23] The voided rezonings mean the Pageland Lane corridor's impervious surface never materialized. The watershed questions the fight surfaced did not void with them.

PART NINE: THE PIPELINE AND THE OPERATING BASE

The Digital Gateway's collapse makes it easy to misread Prince William as a county that stopped. It did not stop. It is the second-largest data center market in Virginia, which is to say one of the largest on earth, and it grew throughout the entire controversy documented in this study. This Part quantifies the base, the pipeline, and where the industry went when the western corridor closed.

The Operating Base

The county's annual reports are the authoritative inventory. As of June 30, 2025, by the 2024 report: 44 operating data centers, four more than a year earlier, comprising roughly 12 million square feet of floor space across more than 4,000 acres, with 15 more facilities under construction expected to add over 4 million square feet. Power consumption by operating facilities reached 862 megawatts in FY2024, up 240 megawatts in a single year; the facilities under construction are expected to add approximately 660 megawatts, a 76 percent increase. Operating data centers carried $8.7 billion in assessed value, facilities under construction another $1.2 billion, and vacant data-center-zoned land $2.9 billion. Land sales reached $3.8 million per acre in 2024.[185] The county's Tax Year 2025 revenue report counts 55 completed turnkey and powered-shell data centers after ten new buildings in that tax year, 621 megawatts of capacity added for a turnkey total of 1,483 megawatts, and about 4.5 million square feet under construction. The two county reports count on different bases, operating buildings and megawatts consumed in one, completed facilities and turnkey capacity in the other.[131] Prince William Water's 2026 materials refer to "about 55 data centers" in the county, counting metered customers rather than buildings; the case study reports all three counts with their bases rather than splicing them.[20]

Regional rank requires precision, because the loose version overstates and the dismissive version understates. Northern Virginia is the world's largest data center market, with operating capacity above 4,900 megawatts in mid-2025. Loudoun County is the largest county-level market in the country. Prince William is consistently described in industry analysis as Virginia's second-largest and fastest-growing data center jurisdiction, with industry trackers crediting it with roughly 7 million square feet of operating capacity and as much as 30 million square feet in development; on operating megawatts alone it would rival entire second-tier metropolitan markets.[186] A widely circulated projection holds that at full buildout of approved and proposed capacity, Prince William would eventually surpass Loudoun itself.[187]* The claim that Prince William is a top-three national market is directionally defensible at the county level and unverified as a ranking; the case study states the verified facts and leaves the league table to the trade press.

In February 2026 the county launched an interactive public map of every data center project, operating, approved, and proposed, with acreage, square footage, and case numbers. The Coalition's Elena Schlossberg called it useful and incomplete: it maps the industrialization but not the environmental impacts, the watershed, or the transmission lines.[188]

The Eastern Pivot

When the courts closed the western corridor, the industry turned east, toward the Route 234 corridor and the less affluent half of the county that had hosted the by-right buildout all along.

The spring 2026 docket tells the story. Three application clusters proposed up to twelve data center buildings in eastern Prince William: Quantico Ridge, four buildings up to 100 feet tall on roughly 160 acres at the edge of Prince William Forest Park; Six Towers, two 80-foot buildings on 23 acres bordering Colgan High School; and a six-building, two-substation complex behind the Four Seasons retirement community in Dumfries, where landowners William Cooley and Barrie Peterson split a joint venture in April 2026 and now propose parallel projects.[189] Residents organized: on June 2, 2026, Woodbridge United volunteers and Four Seasons residents in matching shirts protested outside the county government center.[190] Quantico Ridge was pulled from its scheduled hearing at the applicant's request in May 2026.[191] The county record shows its rezoning and special use permit withdrawn on June 9, 2026, and its comprehensive plan amendment, CPA2026-00005, withdrawn on August 10. The Prince William Times reported in July that the developer, Highland Digital, had proposed a land swap with Prince William Forest Park, 73 acres of the developer's wetlands for 36 acres of parkland; the paper cited no federal notice, and the National Park Service and the Department of the Interior did not comment to it. Six Towers, REZ2026-00019, was pending on the county record as of November 24, 2026.[192] The two Four Seasons-area applications went to formal review: Cooley's Atlantic Funding filed on May 22, 2026 for 60 acres and Peterson's Southgate Business on June 3 for 79 acres, each for three data center buildings and a substation, both outside the overlay. County planning staff returned case-planner comments on both in September, filed on the county record as dated September 9 for Southgate and September 14 for Atlantic Funding. InsideNoVa reported on September 29 that staff told Atlantic Funding it was "not able to support this application in its current form," citing "substantial issues and deficiencies," that staff said much the same of the Southgate application, and that the applicants had 45 days to revise.[193] As of November 24, 2026 the county record shows both applications pending at the first review round, with no revised submission filed, and neither appears on the Planning Commission's agendas for October 14, November 18 or December 9.[194]

The distributional reading writes itself, which is why the case study flags it rather than belabors it. The western fight was won by a corridor with $137,048 in median household income, twelve plaintiffs, and four years of litigation funding. The next wave is aimed at school fence lines and a 55-plus community in the county's east, the same end of the county that absorbed the overlay district's by-right construction for a decade while the headlines stayed west. The eastern communities start without the Rural Crescent's planning protections and without the battlefield's national constituency. They also lack the procedural gift that decided the western fight, a defective newspaper advertisement. Whether they can replicate the western outcome anyway is the live distributional justice question in Prince William as of this writing.

The Regulatory Countermove

The board's response to the eastern wave was structural. On March 3, 2026, the same night it approved the Hornbaker Road data center outside the overlay on a 4-3 vote, the board initiated a zoning text amendment, docketed as DPA2026-00006, aimed at by-right data center development in the Data Center Opportunity Zone Overlay District. As initiated, the March text would have required a special use permit, and therefore a public hearing and a board vote, for new data center projects inside the overlay; redefined and shrunk the overlay's boundaries around defined eligibility criteria while avoiding mass nonconformities for existing facilities; and made light-industrial (M-2) zoning with a special use permit the primary path outside it.[195] That text never reached a hearing. On May 19, 2026, the board directed staff to pause it and postponed the Planning Commission hearing set for June 10; on June 9 it rescinded the March initiation and, unanimously with Vega absent from the vote, initiated a revised text.[196] The board adopted the revised amendment on September 22, 2026, unanimously, as Ord. No. 26-67, after a substitute motion to cut the fifth eligibility pathway's 90-day window to zero failed 3-5. The adopted text kept the 90-day window and carries neither the Planning Commission's recommended 120 days nor its 500-foot setback for fifth-pathway projects.[197] The adopted amendment narrows by-right development rather than ending it. As the county describes it, the overlay is closed to any future expansion; properties inside it as of September 21, 2026 that meet one or more of five eligibility pathways remain in it and "may continue to exercise existing by-right data center development permissions"; and outside it, new data centers in the listed commercial, office and industrial districts "must now proceed through the Special Use Permit (SUP) process." Four pathways closed on the adoption date. The fifth, for pending applications, closes on December 21, 2026, after which the county will publish the amended overlay map. Development Services told industry on October 16 that the ordinance "will become effective" on December 21 and that data center site plans

“accepted by the Land Development Division up to 11:59 pm, December 21, 2026, will be grandfathered under the original ordinance,” accepted meaning uploaded and through the county’s quality control check.[198] Before adoption, staff counted roughly 3,641 acres in about 232 parcels as qualifying to remain as of August 31, 2026, a reduction of about 6,057 acres, or approximately 62 percent; the amended map follows the December 21 close.[197] Ten years of by-right administrative approval, on top of the pre-overlay base and alongside board-approved projects outside the overlay, produced an operating base of 44 buildings by the county’s mid-2025 count and 55 completed facilities by its tax-year 2025 count, and the revenue machine of Part Six. Outside the overlay, the county now decides project by project and in public whether it meant it.

What Is Approved and Unbuilt

The pipeline’s other notable feature is how much of it is entitled but not rising. Devlin: upheld, sold to Amazon for $700 million, 3.5 million square feet entitled, no reported groundbreaking as of June 12, 2026.[78] Mid-County Industrial Park: approved June 2024, construction not yet begun as of May 2026.[199] The $2.9 billion in vacant data-center-zoned land sits on the county’s books as inventory. Amazon spent $120 million on 44 acres near Gainesville in February 2026, and an adjacent former garden center sold to another data center developer for $160 million, land-banking at prices that assume the buildout continues.[200] Iron Mountain extended its Manassas campus by rezoning in July 2025; AWS began construction on a campus near Nokesville Road while its site plans were still in review.[201] The Sanders Lane application, CPA2026-00012, just under 1,940 acres, documented in Part Four, stopped at the first step when the board declined to initiate it on July 7, 2026.[96] The operating base grew through every year of the controversy, the correction, and the collapse. The Digital Gateway is dead, and Prince William County’s data center industry never needed it. It has the east.

PART TEN: THE STATEWIDE FRAME

Prince William's record did not stay local. The 2026 General Assembly session was the most data-center-intensive in Virginia history, the county's delegation wrote much of it, and the Commonwealth came within a day of its first-ever partial government shutdown over a dispute about how to tax the industry this county hosts, before a budget signed June 30, 2026 settled the dispute by inventing a new tax. This Part sets out the legislative record precisely, because unresolved versions of it have circulated.

The 2026 Session: What Passed

Governor Abigail Spanberger, who took office in January 2026, signed every data center bill the session sent her, fifteen in the count of one legislative tracking service.[202] The ones that matter for this series, with their final status:

HB 507 (McAuliff, D-Fauquier), signed April 8, 2026, as Chapter 397, effective July 1, 2026: prohibits the Department of Environmental Quality from issuing an air permit for any data center application submitted on or after July 1, 2026, unless each engine-generator's permitted emission limit meets Tier 4-equivalent levels. The bill was introduced far broader, with battery-first backup requirements and air monitoring, and was narrowed to the generator standard.[203]

HB 153 (Thomas, D-Prince William) and SB 94 (Roem, D-Manassas), signed April 13, 2026, as Chapters 567 and 568, effective July 1, 2026, identical twin acts: before approving a rezoning, special exception, or special use permit for a new high energy use facility, a locality must require a site assessment of the sound profile on residences and schools within 500 feet, and may require assessment of effects on groundwater, surface water, agricultural resources, parks, registered historic sites, and forestland. These are the direct successors of the 2025 site-assessment bills that Governor Youngkin vetoed in May 2025. The conference committee, which included both Prince William patrons, resolved the chambers' differences by dropping the Senate's industrial-zoning-only siting mandate; what survived is mandatory on sound and permissive on everything else. Roem called the final version "the bare minimum." Thomas promised to be back: "there's always next session."[204] For any companion report still carrying the SB 94/HB 153 conference as unresolved: the conference reports were adopted March 14, 2026, and both bills were signed April 13.

SB 553 (Srinivasan, D-Loudoun) and its identical twin HB 496 (Guzman, D-Prince William), signed April 13, 2026, as Chapters 896 and 623, effective January 1, 2027: require water utilities to report monthly potable and reclaimed water volumes delivered to permitted data centers to the State Water Control Board.[205]

SB 253 (Lucas, D-Portsmouth), signed May 14, 2026, as Chapter 1124, effective July 1, 2026: directs Commission-approved shifting of PJM capacity auction costs and data-center-driven distribution and substation costs onto the large loads that cause them, the first structural cost-allocation statute of the data center era.[206] A separate new law requires Commission review of Dominion's load forecasting.[207]

The Prince William delegation's unfinished business is as telling as its wins. Delegate Thomas's bills on emergency generator disclosure and certificates of operation for high-load facilities died in committee. Senator Roem's bills on taxing data center bank tenants and on generator limits were continued to 2027. The utility cost-allocation bills modeled on JLARC's rate-protection recommendations were continued to 2027 in both chambers.[208] The 2026 session legislated about noise, generators, and water reporting. It did not touch local-official conflicts of interest, the gap this case study documents, and no bill of the session proposed to.

The Budget Impasse

The General Assembly adjourned sine die on March 14, 2026, without a budget. The dispute is the data center sales and use tax exemption, Virginia Code Section 58.1-609.3(18), worth $1.6 billion to $1.9 billion in FY2025, the largest economic development incentive in state history.[209]

The positions, as the record stood in June: Senate Finance Chair Louise Lucas wanted the exemption ended in January 2027, eight years early, and the revenue redirected to education, transportation, and localities; her public framing had been blunt, including a June 5 social media post deriding "Data Center Diva and Amazon Don," the governor and the Speaker, for refusing "to alter the freeloading policy for data centers." The House kept the exemption but passed a bill conditioning it on clean energy and efficiency requirements, 61-34; Senate Finance killed that bill 15-0 in March. Governor Spanberger opposed early repeal on contract-sanctity grounds, in her words: "I'm not going to break a contract the state has signed," while floating an electricity consumption tax on data centers as an alternative revenue mechanism, and calling it "absolutely unacceptable" for the impasse to run past July 1.[210] A special session convened April 23 and recessed within hours. The House was to return June 18 and the Senate June 22, with the existing appropriation act expiring June 30 and, without a new one, Virginia's first partial shutdown beginning July 1.[211]

Prince William's record runs through the middle of the fight. The budget bill's House patron and lead conferee is Delegate Luke Torian of Prince William. The Secretary of Finance read aloud to Senate Finance from a Digital Gateway developer's letter announcing its withdrawal from Virginia investment, citing "the current legislative and political environment."[212] The Data Center Coalition and the building trades

testified to the industry's reliability as a partner; Lucas answered that the industry has nowhere else to go: "We got the infrastructure, we got the water, we got the land. Where are they going?"[210] Both arguments are, in their way, citations to Prince William: the county supplies the evidence that the industry pays enormously, and the evidence that it keeps coming back through every correction a community can impose. No sitting Prince William supervisor appears in the published 2026 session testimony record on the data center bills; the Coalition to Protect Prince William County held a lobby day in Richmond on February 9, and Schlossberg's verdict on the session was that the bills were progress without "real accountability or restraints."[213]

The impasse resolved at the deadline. Governor Spanberger signed the biennial budget on June 30, 2026. The sales-and-use exemption survived. In its place, the budget created a data center electricity consumption tax of $0.011 per kilowatt-hour, levied from July 1, 2026 until July 1, 2028, with no more than $600 million of its revenue in a fiscal year going to the general fund and any excess refunded to operators pro rata.[214] The case study notes the obvious: a state that came within a day of shutting its government over data center taxation, eighteen months after JLARC documented the industry's costs and a county election turned on its governance, has moved past debating whether the industry is a policy problem and is now debating the price.

PART ELEVEN: READINGS BY RESEARCH SPECIALTY

This Part consolidates the evidence by framework, as a reading guide.

The Distributional Justice Reading

The Prince William record complicates the standard environmental justice template at both ends. The community that defeated the largest data center proposal in American history was affluent, educated, multiethnic, and lawyered (Part One); the willing sellers the project assembled were the ones left in limbo, in federal court for nearly seven months over contracts that had promised generational wealth, until the case was dismissed on the developer's stipulation, on terms this study has not read (Part Three); and the industry's 2026 pivot aims the next wave at the county's less affluent east, at school fence lines and a retirement community, in the half of the county that absorbed the by-right buildout without a headline for a decade (Part Nine). The cost-of-correction catalog (Part Five) is the distributional core: the full sequence required resources most communities do not have, and the eastern corridor is about to test what happens without them.

The Institutional Behavior Reading

Prince William supplies the series' only complete capture-and-correction cycle: financial entanglement documented in public filings (Part Four), correction through primary, general election, and courts (Parts Three and Five), and a post-correction record in which the corrected institution denies more and taxes more while the money relationship between developers and officials grows larger and more routinized (Part Seven). The Vega thread is the framework's sharpest live question, durability versus cyclicality, and the record as of November 24, 2026 is deliberately left unresolved because it is unresolved. The override pattern, two boards, three approvals over four professional recommendations of denial, one disbanded resident advisory group, is the institutional constant across the cycle.

The Utility Finance Reading

Part Six gives the high-rate pole of the series: $1.25 to $4.50 in seven tax years, revenue from $52.2 million to a projected $550 million in seven fiscal years, dependence rising from 7 percent toward something the county's own budget frames as structural. Part Eight gives the other ledger: GS-5 and its 14-year, 85/60 minimums, the 70-gigawatt queue, $28.3 billion in projected transmission capital, the $14-to-37-per-month JLARC band, and a capacity auction in which data centers not yet built moved billions. The depreciation schedule (50-35-20-10-5) and the stabilization reserve are the volatility evidence. The single sentence version: the

county taxes the equipment, the territory's ratepayers finance the system that powers it, and the state subsidizes its purchase.

The Energy, Labor, and Infrastructure Reading

JLARC's sub-2,000 statewide permanent jobs figure against 86 million square feet of approved and proposed local capacity (Parts One and Six) is the labor finding in miniature. Construction employment is real, large, and cyclical, roughly 1,700 jobs per building-year at prototype scale, with fifteen buildings under construction at once in 2025. The infrastructure record (Part Eight) documents the engineering counterpart: 862 operating megawatts rising 76 percent on the current construction pipeline alone, a 500 kV line crossing battlefield park land to serve load that, on Dominion's sworn account, never included the flagship project, and a watershed absorbing a salinity trend the monitoring laboratory has begun to flag.

The Energy Geography Reading

Prince William is the origin geography of the series. Loudoun's overflow first crested here (Part One), and the by-right overlay manufactured an industrial corridor administratively (Parts One and Nine). The frontier logic, exhaust the east, breach the rural boundary, then return east when the boundary holds, played out in full within a single decade. The Rural Crescent survived on a procedural ruling rather than a planning decision. The eastern applications filed behind Four Seasons in May and June 2026 went into county review while a 1,940-acre successor assemblage north of Pageland Lane was refused at its first step. Those two facts are the diffusion evidence: the buildout moved east and kept going.

PART TWELVE: GAPS IN THE RECORD

Each item below is an open documentary question with an address. Items marked with an asterisk correspond to asterisk-flagged claims in the body that rest on secondary sources.

Decisions Pending

DPA2026-00006, adopted September 22, 2026: the fifth eligibility pathway closes December 21, 2026, after which the county will publish the amended overlay map; none had been published as of November 24, 2026. The Four Seasons-area applications and Six Towers, all pending on the county record as of November 24, 2026, the Four Seasons pair at the first review round with no revised submission. Morrisville to Wishing Star, Case No. PUR-2026-00021 (evidentiary hearing set to begin November 16, 2026; no transcript, post-hearing filing or Hearing Examiner's report on the docket as of November 24, 2026). The noise ordinance's effectiveness review, which county staff proposed to bring back in late spring 2027 (Part Seven). The USGS countywide groundwater study (results expected later in 2026; not located as of October 9, 2026 and not searched for this version).

Verification Priorities

1. The Redwood Condo Investors 25 LLC contribution [155], dated April 20, 2026 by the committee's large-contribution report (COMET). The entity's connection, if any, to Prince William land or data center business remains undocumented; State Corporation Commission records associate it with the Redwood Commercial organization of Centreville.

2. The FY2027 data center revenue total at the ADOPTED rates ($0.865 / $4.50) [134][135]: the adopted FY2027 budget document does not state one (searched November 24, 2026), and Part Six's figures are computed at the proposed rates. A county publication of the total at adopted rates would settle it.

3. The $18 million (FY2026) and $21.47 million (FY2027) rate-increase projections [136][138]: named-outlet sourced (budget director via InsideNoVa/WTOP; Prince William Times, April 10, 2026, corroborated by the $313 million business tangible property line in the proposed FY2027 budget). The county markup PDFs behind them were not posted as of June 12, 2026. Low priority.*

4. The full-buildout projection that Prince William would surpass Loudoun [187]: a February 2024 Prince William Times analysis; treat as projection, not fact.*

5. Mid-County Industrial Park permit-level records [199]: site plan and grading records are on the county ePortal, whose public search needs no account; not checked for this version.

Records and Their Addresses

1. The complete appellate record in the consolidated rezoning appeals, including all briefs and the QTS petitions for appeal (Supreme Court of Virginia clerk; partial set posted by the Coalition), together with the July 2, 2026 notice of withdrawal and any final Supreme Court of Virginia docket order (not retrieved at snapshot).

2. The Candland referral file: Lawson's September 2023 referral letter and enclosures, the Virginia State Police preliminary inquiry documentation, and the Commonwealth's Attorney's December 2023 closure letter.

3. The full text of the December 9, 2022 Ashworth COIA opinion. (The May 2022 opinion, letter dated May 23, is online in full as Exhibit H, pages 47-51, of the Candland recall petition at protectpwc.org.)

4. The 2019 Robl opinion referencing "state and county revolving door laws," and any board resolutions under County Code Section 2-51(b) waiving the prohibition for any officer.

5. Wheeler's complete SEI set, 2020-2023, plus any amended filings (Clerk of the Board; the key filings are posted but amendments are not indexed).

6. Digital Gateway site records: demolition and grading permit indexes for the Pageland Lane corridor 2024-2026, to convert "no reported demolition" into a records-based negative.

7. A single Commissioner of the Revenue data center revenue series reconciling the county's annual reports, whose tax-year 2019 totals differ by $0.1 million (Part Six).

8. Hearing recordings: the full video of the November 1, 2022 and December 12-13, 2023 hearings (pwcva.gov archive) for ethnographic use; the closing-remarks windows are transcribed in this study's endnotes, and the testimony itself, from two hearings that together ran more than forty hours, is the richest community-voice corpus in the series.

9. Prince William Water disaggregated facility-level consumption data and UOSA discharge monitoring; Occoquan Watershed Monitoring Laboratory salinity reports; any monitoring that isolates data-center-attributable sediment loading in the Occoquan.

10. The county’s approved-but-unbuilt inventory as maintained for the interactive map (ArcGIS layer export), to quantify entitled-versus-operating square footage at a single date.

11. Res. Nos. 26-557, 26-558 and 26-559, adopted with Ord. No. 26-67 on September 22, 2026 (Clerk to the Board).

12. The Planning Commission’s records of action on DPA2026-00006 for July 15 and September 9, 2026 (Planning Office).

13. YES PAC’s campaign finance reports after May 25, 2026 (Department of Elections, COMET; VPAP).

14. The consent order of dismissal of September 14, 2026 in Ghadban v. GW Acquisition Co., LLC, No. 1:26-cv-00453 (E.D. Va.), docket entry 53, and the stipulation it rests on, entry 52, for their terms (PACER).

15. The evidentiary hearing transcript and the Hearing Examiner’s report in Case No. PUR-2026-00021 (SCC docket).

16. The county’s case-planner comment letters on the Atlantic Funding and Southgate applications (ePortal attachments, REZ2026-00041 and REZ2026-00044).

17. The materials for the board’s November 17, 2026 noise ordinance update discussion (agenda item 11.C).

APPENDIX: TIMELINE OF TURNING POINTS, 1995-2026

Date	Event
1995	Data centers designated a county “Targeted Industry”
1998	Rural Crescent adopted
1999-2001	Equipment tax rate cut from $3.70 to $1.25
May 17, 2016	Ordinance 16-21 creates the by-right Data Center Overlay District
July 20, 2021	Resolution 21-445 initiates the Digital Gateway CPA (2,139-acre corridor)
October 25, 2021	Candland contracts to sell his Pageland Lane property to Compass
November 4, 2021	Candland and 18 neighbors file the Catharpin Farm Estates CPA application
May 23, 2022	Ashworth COIA opinion (letter date): Candland must recuse
June-July 2022	Recall petitions launched against Candland and Wheeler
July 7, 2022	Wheeler announces Blackstone divestiture
November 1-2, 2022	CPA approved 5-2 after 14-hour hearing; staff recommended denial
December 9-16, 2022	Second Ashworth opinion; Candland resigns
March 2023	Candland working for LSI Communications
June 20, 2023	Jefferson defeats Wheeler in Democratic primary, 52.46-47.54
September 20, 2023	Lawson refers Candland’s consulting for investigation
November 7, 2023	Jefferson defeats Lawson; data-center-skeptic chair elected
November 28, 2023	Lame-duck board approves Devlin Technology Park
December 12-13, 2023	27-hour hearing; rezonings approved 4-3-1
December 2023	State Police preliminary inquiry closed: no county-code violation by Candland
January 2024	Jefferson board seated
April 18, 2024	Equipment rate raised $2.15 to $3.70 (7-1)
June 4, 2024	Mid-County Industrial Park approved 5-3 over Planning Commission denial
December 16, 2024	YES PAC organized; chief of staff named treasurer per filing
March 28, 2025	$100,000 Duarte Mulhausen contribution to YES PAC

Date	Event
April 22, 2025	Rate raised to $4.15 (TY2025)
July 3, 2025	Second $100,000 contribution (Cooley) to YES PAC
July 20, 2025	Supervisor Bob Weir dies
July 22, 2025	Court of Appeals affirms dismissal of CPA challenge
August 7, 2025	Judge Irving voids the three rezonings ab initio
September 9, 2025	Bristow Data Center Campus denied, reported as the board's first denial of a rezoning to expand a data center campus outside the designated area
September 16, 2025	Devlin rezoning upheld on appeal
October 7, 2025	Resident data center advisory group disbanded 4-2
October 28 / November 17, 2025	Appellate stay; construction barred pending appeal
November 4, 2025	Stewart (D) wins Gainesville special election
November 5, 2025	Amazon buys 189 Devlin acres for $700 million
December 23, 2025	Supreme Court of Virginia refuses CPA-case petition
February 24, 2026	Court of Appeals hears the rezoning appeals
February 27, 2026	Dominion files Morrisville-Wishing Star 500 kV CPCN (PUR-2026-00021)
March 3, 2026	Hornbaker approved 4-3; zoning text amendment initiated (DPA2026-00006); Sanders Lane CPA filed
March 10, 2026	LaCroix (R) wins Woodbridge special election; board 5-3
March 14, 2026	General Assembly adjourns with no budget; data center exemption the dispute
March 31, 2026	Court of Appeals affirms: rezonings void ab initio (Raphael, unanimous, published)
April 8 / 13, 2026	HB 507 signed; HB 153/SB 94 and SB 553/HB 496 signed
April 14, 2026	Board votes unanimously to end the county's defense (~$1.7M spent)
April 21, 2026	FY2027 budget adopted 5-3: rate to $4.50, real estate cut to $0.865; the proposal had projected ~$550M in data center revenue
April 28, 2026	Compass withdraws from the Digital Gateway
April 30, 2026	QTS petitions the Supreme Court of Virginia
May 19, 2026	Board pauses the zoning text amendment; June 10 Planning Commission hearing postponed

Date	Event
May 21-26, 2026	Opposition briefs; American Battlefield Trust urges refusal
May 22, 2026	Ghadban v. GW Acquisition federal suit stayed pending the Supreme Court of Virginia
June 2, 2026	Eastern-county residents protest new proposals at the McCoart Building
June 9, 2026	Board rescinds the March initiation and initiates a revised overlay text (Res. No. 26-374); Quantico Ridge rezoning and SUP withdrawn
June 29, 2026	SCC Hearing Examiner moves the Morrisville-Wishing Star evidentiary hearing to November 16
June 30, 2026	State budget signed: $0.011/kWh data center electricity tax created; sales-tax exemption preserved
July 2, 2026	GW Acquisition withdraws its petition; QTS announces a wind-down; the Digital Gateway is dead
July 5, 2026	Evidence snapshot
July 7, 2026	Board refuses Sanders Lane deferral 7-1, then declines unanimously to initiate the CPA
July 31, 2026	SCC Rider T1 final order
September 14, 2026	Ghadban v. GW Acquisition dismissed by consent order on GW Acquisition’s stipulation
September 22, 2026	DPA2026-00006 adopted unanimously (Ord. No. 26-67); zero-day substitute fails 3-5; Vint Hill Substation SUP denied
September 29, 2026	Dominion rebuttal testimony: Digital Gateway load was not in the models behind the line’s need
September 30, 2026	SCC public witness hearing on Morrisville-Wishing Star
October 16, 2026	County guidance: data center site plans accepted by December 21 grandfathered under the original overlay ordinance
October 20, 2026	Noise ordinance enforcement report: no violations May through September; review proposed for late spring 2027
October 28, 2026	SCC Hearing Examiner strikes cost-allocation testimony in the Morrisville-Wishing Star case
November 16, 2026	Morrisville-Wishing Star evidentiary hearing scheduled to begin
November 24, 2026	Evidence update

ENDNOTES

[1] The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation study, “Energy Implications of Data Center Growth in Georgia, Virginia, and Tennessee,” is led by a three-member principal investigator team with two project consultants, whose combined expertise spans anthropology and institutional analysis, environmental and distributional justice, geography and sustainability, utility finance, and energy and labor studies. Researcher-level attributions are maintained separately in project files.

[2] The companion report is 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; Hanover County, 10.5281/zenodo.20672048; Orange County and the Town of Orange, 10.5281/zenodo.20672496.

[3] U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census, Prince William County, Virginia. Population: 482,204.

[4] Prince William County Comprehensive Plan, Rural Crescent designation, adopted 1998, reaffirmed in subsequent plan cycles.

[5] Virginia Department of Forestry, Conway-Robinson State Forest.

[6] National Park Service, Manassas National Battlefield Park boundary data; Dominion Energy, Morrisville to Wishing Star fact sheet (2025), describing the existing 250-foot transmission right-of-way through the Brawner Farm section along Pageland Lane.

[7] Prince William Water, Water and Wastewater Treatment Capacity FAQ (princewilliamwater.org, accessed June 12, 2026): Occoquan Reservoir service population of approximately 800,000. Catharpin Creek/Bull Run headwaters: Bay Journal, “Will data centers imperil drinking water in Northern Virginia?” (2022).

[8] Prince William County, Data Center Fiscal Impact Analysis (PFM, June 30, 2022), p. 3: “Targeted Industry” designation history (1995, 1999, 2014, 2019).

[9] Prince William County, Ordinance 16-21, adopted May 17, 2016. Created the Data Center Opportunity Zone Overlay District (DCOZOD).

[10] Prince William County, TY2023 Data Center Tax Revenue Report (September 24, 2024): tax rate of $1.25 per $100 from approximately 2001 through 2019.

[11] Prince William County, Data Center Overlay Frequently Asked Questions (2022): “approximately 72% of the county’s industrially zoned land is located within the overlay.”

[12] BAE Urban Economics, “Prince William County Data Center Market Study” (final report dated December 1, 2021; commissioned 2021), executive summary and competitive assessment sections. Published at pwcva.gov.

[13] U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-year estimates, Gainesville District, Prince William County: population 70,566; median household income $137,048; educational attainment and racial composition.

[14] Prince William County Board of County Supervisors, Resolution 21-445, July 20, 2021. Initiation of CPA2021-00004, PW Digital Gateway.

[15] Court of Appeals of Virginia, opinion of March 31, 2026 (see note 52), reciting the rezonings as approved: REZ2022-00036 (Compass, applicant H&H Capital Acquisitions, LLC, 103 parcels, approximately 884 acres, 11.5 million sq ft, Ordinance 23-57); REZ2022-00032 (DG North, applicant GW Acquisition Co. I, LLC, approximately 534 acres, 7 million sq ft, Ordinance 23-59); REZ2022-00033 (DG South, applicant GW Acquisition Co., LLC, approximately 342 acres, 3.7 million sq ft, Ordinance 23-58). Combined: approximately 1,760 acres (Prince William Times, May 1, 2026: “about 1,760 acres”). Earlier county planning office postings carried different acreage figures (470.42, 341.90, 824.90) and a different applicant mapping; this study follows the appellate record.

[16] BAE Urban Economics, “Targeted Industry Land Need Analysis” (May 2022), pp. 4-5: data centers projected at 64% of new space demand over 20 years; high-demand scenario of 8,666 acres against 5,316 acres of buildout capacity.

[17] Coalition to Protect Prince William County, “Proliferation of PWC Data Centers,” protectpwc.org/data-centers/: 86 million sq ft approved and proposed; 26.5 GW.

[18] Digital Gateway demand projections of approximately 3 GW: Piedmont Environmental Council, “Putting the Pieces Together on Digital Gateway”; contemporaneous corridor reporting. Ratepayer recovery of transmission costs: Dominion Energy Integrated Resource Plan filings with the Virginia State Corporation Commission; see Part Eight.

[19] Virginia Electric and Power Company, Rebuttal Testimony of Steven J. Schweiger, Case No. PUR-2026-00021, filed September 29, 2026 (SCC DocID 392544), pp. 10-12 and the footnote at p. 11: projected Digital Gateway loading “had not been considered in the models at the time PJM and the Company identified the need for the proposed Project”; none of the power flow cases referenced in the application and provided to Staff included it; the campus’s total requested capacity was 3,600 MW, of which, even had it been included, PJM’s 2029 Regional Transmission Expansion Plan (RTEP) model “would only have

realistically seen approximately 50-150 megawatts”; six of the twelve Digital Gateway customer load requests were presented at meetings of PJM’s Transmission Expansion Advisory Committee (TEAC) (need slides September 13, 2024 and October 8, 2025), with cancellation slides for all six on September 8, 2026; the violations the project addresses are “expected to arise within the applicable planning horizon, specifically in the 2027-2028 timeframe, irrespective of whether additional future developments ultimately materialize” (p. 12). Restated in Dominion’s Responses to Hearing Examiner Questions, filed November 13, 2026 (DocID 393693), Response 3. On the system-wide need, the same rebuttal at pp. 9-10: the need cannot be “characterized as being limited to, or driven solely by, large-load customers.” Fauquier County witness Adam Shellenberger’s contrary position as quoted in the Schweiger rebuttal at p. 10. Both are parties’ positions; the Commission has made no finding.

[20] Prince William Water, Water and Wastewater Treatment Capacity FAQ (accessed June 12, 2026): data centers consumed 3.8% of average daily demand and 10.1% of maximum daily demand in calendar 2025; “about 55 data centers” in the county.

[21] Prince William Water: single data center building peak consumption of up to 88,000 gallons per day during summer months.

[22] Prince William Water, Water and Wastewater Treatment Capacity FAQ: description of the Potomac-to-Occoquan transfer cycle through data center cooling and UOSA treatment, including the characterization of the UOSA discharge as a relatively constant, high-sodium flow.

[23] National Parks Conservation Association, “New Report Finds Proposed Data Centers in Northern Virginia Threaten National Parks, Drinking Water,” npca.org: estimated 57,000 tons of additional sediment runoff. Advocacy projection; no post-2022 monitoring report quantifies a data-center-attributable sediment load. See Part Twelve.

[24] Kate Andrews, “Judge voids massive Prince William Digital Gateway project,” Virginia Business, August 8, 2025: twelve Oak Valley homeowners as plaintiffs.

[25] Prince William Times (via Coalition to Protect PWC), November 5, 2021: Candland joins 18 other Catharpin Farm Estates homeowners in CPA filing to redesignate from agricultural/estate to tech/flex.

[26] CPA Initiation Form and Special Power of Attorney and Interest Disclosure, filed with Prince William County, dated October 25, 2021. The sale contract itself is a private document; the CPA filing is the public record of its existence and date.

[27] Prince William County Planning Office, staff recommendation on CPA2021-00004: denial. Grounds included inconsistency with the comprehensive plan, environmental impacts, and insufficient specificity on infrastructure demands.

[28] Court of Appeals of Virginia, opinion of July 22, 2025 (note 45), memorializing the November 1, 2022 hearing as running more than 14 hours with nearly 240 speakers. Contemporaneous reporting: DCist/WAMU (Margaret Barthel), Prince William Times (Shannon Clark, Jill Palermo), InsideNoVa.

[29] National Parks Conservation Association report on battlefield viewshed and water impacts, npca.org.

[30] Board vote at the meeting that began November 1, 2022, taken the morning of November 2 (InsideNoVa, November 2, 2022; Potomac Local, November 2, 2022): 5-2 (Wheeler, Angry, Bailey, Franklin, Boddye for; Lawson, Vega against). Candland recusal: Commonwealth's Attorney Amy Ashworth, written COIA opinion of May 2022 (letter dated May 23; see note 82). See Part Four.

[31] Resignation announced December 10, 2022, effective December 16, 2022, following the second Ashworth opinion received December 9, 2022. Full documentation at notes 84-85.

[32] Matthew Barakat (AP), June 22, 2023; Antonio Olivo (Washington Post), June 21, 2023; Q1 2023 fundraising per Blue Virginia (April 18, 2023), citing VPAP data. See Part Five.

[33] Prince William County Planning Office, staff recommendation on the Digital Gateway rezonings: denial, citing failure to meet the CPA framework on open space and insufficient specificity in elevations and blueprints. Planning Commission recommendation of denial, November 8, 2023: Court of Appeals opinion of March 31, 2026 (note 52).

[34] Prince William County Board of County Supervisors, meeting of December 12-13, 2023. Duration of 27 hours confirmed by DCist/WAMU (Margaret Barthel, December 13, 2023), InsideNoVa, and Prince William Times. More than 17 hours of public comment, and adjournment at 1:14 p.m. on December 13, per the Court of Appeals opinion of March 31, 2026 (note 52).

[35] Opinion of March 31, 2026, p. 10: "The Board adjourned at 1:14 p.m. on December 13—27 hours after the meeting had begun"; more than 17 hours of public comment; Weir's motion to deny failed 4-4; Angry's motion to approve passed 4-3 with one abstention; staff recommended denial of all three rezonings. Opinion, p. 27: Wheeler "cast the deciding vote, and her term ended in 2023"; it is

“unclear whether the Board would have approved the rezonings if the question had been postponed to a later hearing date to satisfy the advertising rules.”

[36] Board vote of December 13, 2023: 4-3-1. Yes: Wheeler, Franklin, Bailey, Angry. No: Lawson, Vega, Weir. Abstain: Boddye. Prince William Times; DCist/WAMU; InsideNoVa. Motion to deny “failed on a four-four vote”: Court of Appeals opinion of March 31, 2026, p. 10 (note 52). Boddye’s vote with the Republicans on that motion: Prince William Times (Shannon Clark), December 20, 2023 (note 37).

[37] Shannon Clark, “Supervisor Kenny Boddye’s abstention was key to the PW Digital Gateway’s approval,” Prince William Times, December 20, 2023, reposted in full by the Coalition to Protect Prince William County (protectpwc.org, December 20, 2023): subhead (“mixed feelings”), the floor-area-ratio and staff-analysis reasons, “in good conscience,” and “in a limbo.”

[38] Supervisor Bob Weir, closing remarks, December 12-13, 2023 hearing. Quotations transcribed from the archived board meeting video, pwcva.gov, final 90 minutes of the session.

[39] Weir’s death, July 20, 2025, age 62, metastatic colon cancer: Prince William Times; Washington Post; WTOP; NBC Washington; Bristow Beat; Potomac Local. Special election to the Gainesville seat: February 21, 2023.

[40] Weir’s transmission and open-space argument: closing remarks, archived board video (note 38). Project demand of approximately 3 GW: note 18.

[41] Board Chair Ann Wheeler, closing remarks, December 12, 2023 session (two five-minute windows preceding the vote). Quotations transcribed from the archived board meeting video, pwcva.gov. The words “misinformation” and “fearmongering,” attributed to these remarks in some accounts, do not appear in the closing-remarks transcript.

[42] Margaret Barthel, “Controversial Data Center Plan Passes In Prince William County After 27-Hour Hearing,” DCist/WAMU, December 13, 2023. The “misinformation… character assassination” framing is Barthel’s characterization of Wheeler’s remarks.

[43] Sabrina Moreno, “Data mining,” Virginia Business, December 31, 2023: “We’re a county that tries to keep up with the Joneses.” Post-vote interview, distinct from the hearing remarks.

[44] Prince William County Board of County Supervisors, approval of Devlin Technology Park (REZ2022-00022), November 28, 2023.

[45] Court of Appeals of Virginia, Oak Valley Homeowners Ass'n v. Prince William Cnty. Bd. of Supervisors, 85 Va. App. 382 (July 22, 2025), Record No. 1144-24-4 (slip opinion: vacourts.gov/static/opinions/opncavwp/1144244.pdf): affirmed Circuit Court dismissal (Judge James A. Willett) of the CPA challenge; no judicially enforceable duty to "listen to and consider" public comments.

[46] Supreme Court of Virginia, No. 250772 (December 23, 2025) (order): petition for appeal refused. Recited in the Court of Appeals opinion of March 31, 2026.

[47] Oak Valley plaintiffs' suit, Prince William County Circuit Court, Case CL24-375 (Judge Kimberly A. Irving).

[48] Katy Burke, et al. v. Board of County Supervisors, Prince William County Circuit Court, Case CL24-334 (Judge Tracy C. Hudson; demurrer sustained); appeal docketed as Record No. 2025-24-4. Counsel: J. Chapman Petersen and Christopher T. Robertson, Chap Petersen & Associates. The American Battlefield Trust's support for and party status in the litigation is described in its own statements (battlefields.org) and in press accounts; the appellate caption names the Burke plaintiffs. Five Burke appellants were voluntarily dismissed with prejudice by order of January 29, 2026 (opinion, n.3).

[49] Prince William County Circuit Court, Judge Kimberly A. Irving, order of August 7, 2025: Digital Gateway rezonings declared void ab initio on two grounds: defective public hearing advertisements in the Washington Post, and application materials not publicly available at first publication. Virginia Business (August 8, 2025); Northern Virginia Magazine (August 11, 2025); WTOP (August 9, 2025); Potomac Local (August 7, 2025).

[50] Court of Appeals of Virginia: stay of October 28, 2025; partial reconsideration of November 17, 2025, barring land disturbance and construction pending appeal. WTOP (November 20, 2025); Prince William Times.

[51] Oral argument February 24, 2026, Arlington. Consolidated Record Nos. 1584-25-4 (GW Acquisition Co., LLC, et al.), 1590-25-4 (Board of County Supervisors), 1592-25-4 (H&H Capital Acquisitions, LLC), heard with Record No. 2025-24-4 (Burke). Counsel and amici per the opinion caption (note 52). InsideNoVa (February 24, 2026); Bristow Beat (February 24, 2026); WUSA9. Record No. 1144-24-4 is the separate CPA case (note 45).

[52] Court of Appeals of Virginia, opinion by Judge Stuart A. Raphael, March 31, 2026 (published; panel: Judges Beales, Raphael, Bernhard; unanimous), 53 pages. Slip opinion: vacourts.gov/static/opinions/opncavwp/1590254.pdf (lead caption record number; the court's index also posts it under 1584254, 1592254, and 2025244). Digest at Virginia Lawyers Weekly, VLW 026-7-114 (April 22, 2026).

Coverage: Sébastien Kraft, “UPDATE: Second ruling voids Digital Gateway data center project in Prince William,” InsideNoVa, March 31, 2026; Josh Janney, “Virginia Appeals Court upholds block on Prince William Digital Gateway project,” Virginia Business, April 1, 2026.

[53] Opinion of March 31, 2026, p. 7: Code § 15.2-2204(A) (Supp. 2023) advertising requirement: publication “once a week for two successive weeks,” first notice no more than 14 days before intended adoption, not less than six days between publications; the Board’s plan for November 28 and December 5 run dates recited at pp. 8-9.

[54] Court of Appeals of Virginia, opinion of March 31, 2026 (note 52), p. 8: the clerk’s November 20, 2023 email to the Post; the Post’s reply quoting $7,509.48 and stating “Saved ads will not run unless they are scheduled and submitted”; the follow-up email requiring confirmation by 3:00 p.m. the next day; the clerk’s failure to call or respond; “It is undisputed that the first ad did not run on November 28, but the parties dispute who was responsible.” Quotations in this and the following notes are verified against the official slip opinion, vacourts.gov/static/opinions/opncavwp/1590254.pdf.

[55] Opinion of March 31, 2026, pp. 32-34: the December 2 and 5 ads violated the where-to-review requirement; draft ordinances not available in the clerk’s office “until December 7, 2023” (pp. 32-33); Kara Klaas’s December 4, 2023 visit and the clerks’ statement that the documents “would not be available until December 7th” (p. 33); the requirement to tell citizens where the documents “may be examined” “means that the text must be available when the ad runs” (pp. 34-35).

[56] Opinion of March 31, 2026, p. 37: the December 9 ad “was also defective because it ran only three days before the December 12 hearing,” violating the not-less-than-five-days requirement of Zoning Ordinance § 32-700.60; because the first two ads failed the where-to-review requirement, the third ad alone also could not satisfy the two-successive-weeks requirement.

[57] Opinion of March 31, 2026, p. 26 (and p. 3): none of the three public advertisements for the December 12, 2023 meeting satisfied Code § 15.2-2204(A) and Prince William County Zoning Ordinance § 32-700.60.

[58] Opinion of March 31, 2026, pp. 31-32: the newspaper-failed-to-publish saving provision held inapplicable; “the Board did not respond in time to the Post’s request to confirm the ad. So the Post was not at fault for failing to publish the ad, the Board was” (p. 32), adopting Judge Irving’s fact-finding.

[59] Opinion of March 31, 2026, p. 36: “The Board’s interpretation would invite sandbagging and thwart the where-to-review and two-successive-weeks notice

requirements," quoting Glazebrook v. Board of Supervisors, 266 Va. 550, 555 (2003) (zoning changes must not be made "suddenly, arbitrarily, or capriciously"). See also pp. 48-49: subsection A protects the public's right to notice through newspaper advertising; violation of requirements essential to the power to legislate renders the action void ab initio.

[60] GW Acquisition Co. petition for appeal (note 66), p. 1 ("unprecedented nullification"; "highly technical notice provisions that harmed no one"), p. 3 ("$40 to 50 billion in private investment"), and p. 13 ("technical foot-faults can have massive economic consequences, as here"; page approximate, confirm on the posted PDF).

[61] Opinion of March 31, 2026, pp. 49-50: "Strict compliance means that a locality's missing the deadlines by even one day renders the resulting ordinance invalid"; the General Assembly "adopted a per se rule that specifies exactly how to advertise"; "Our resolution of the issues presented here is not influenced by the vibrant public debate surrounding data-center development. It is not our place to take sides in that debate"; p. 50, quoting Town of Jonesville v. Powell Valley Village L.P., 254 Va. 70, 74 (1997) (failure to abide by statutory prescriptions renders the ordinance void ab initio).

[62] Opinion of March 31, 2026, conclusion: affirmance as to Ordinances 23-57, 23-58, 23-59; reversal and final judgment in Burke (Count IX); partial stay of November 17, 2025 continued pending any Supreme Court proceedings, expiring "when there can be no further proceedings in the Supreme Court," with the construction and land-disturbance bar preserved.

[63] "Prince William drops legal fight for PW Digital Gateway," Prince William Times, April 14, 2026; WTOP, "Prince William Co. withdraws from Digital Gateway lawsuit, reversing course from 2023," April 2026; Virginia Lawyers Weekly (April 22, 2026). Unanimous board direction to counsel. Cost: "about $1.7 million" as of March 31, per county spokesperson Nikki Brown (Prince William Times); "$1.72 million in taxpayer funds" (InsideNoVa, Sébastien Kraft, April 14, 2026). Vote video posted by Coalition to Protect PWC, April 14, 2026.

[64] InsideNoVa, "Former Prince William chair has no regrets over Digital Gateway vote as supervisors weigh next move," late summer 2025: the article anticipates the board's September 9, 2025 discussion of whether to appeal Judge Irving's August 7, 2025 ruling and refers to the August 27 denial of a stay; the page carries no date (insidenova.com/headlines/former-prince-william-chair-has-no-regrets-over-digital-gateway-vote-as-supervisors-weigh-next/article_6a2e14ca-0740-40cd-a1cb-e84373d6e71d.html).

[65] “Developers drop appeal of zoning decision on Digital Gateway project,” InsideNoVa via WTOP, April 29, 2026. Byers quotation via technical.ly, “Data center fight offers crucial lessons as it heads to Virginia Supreme Court,” June 2, 2026.

[66] GW Acquisition Co. petitions for appeal and notices of appeal, Supreme Court of Virginia, filed April 30, 2026, in the Oak Valley and Burke cases; copies posted at protectpwc.org (May 1, 2026). Quotation per “QTS files 11th hour appeal to keep the Prince William Digital Gateway alive,” Prince William Times, May 1, 2026. Also: InsideNoVa; Bisnow; Washington Times (May 4, 2026); Data Center Dynamics; Washington Post, “Plan for massive Virginia data center complex heads to state supreme court,” May 1, 2026.

[67] Oak Valley HOA et al., brief in opposition, filed May 21, 2026: mootness/advisory-opinion argument premised on the Board’s non-appeal. Alexis Kramer, “Landowners Urge Virginia Top Court To Pass On Blackstone’s Digital Gateway Fight,” Bisnow, May 26, 2026. American Battlefield Trust, “American Battlefield Trust Urges Virginia Supreme Court to Reject Manassas Data Center Developer Appeal,” May 21, 2026 (battlefields.org).

[68] InsideNoVa, “Digital Gateway data center case could stretch into 2027,” May 21, 2026 (reporting plaintiffs’ counsel Chap Petersen’s timeline: writ panel no earlier than September 2026; if granted, decision by approximately mid-2027; “a 98-yard Hail Mary pass”). No writ panel was ever convened; the petition was withdrawn July 2, 2026 (note 69).

[69] Withdrawal and termination, July 2, 2026: GW Acquisition Co., LLC and GW Acquisition Co. I, LLC filed notice withdrawing their petition. Potomac Local, “QTS Withdraws Supreme Court Appeal, Ending Proposed Digital Gateway Data Center Project,” July 3, 2026, potomaclocal.com/2026/07/03/qts-withdraws-supreme-court-appeal-ending-proposed-digital-gateway-data-center-project/; WTOP, “Digital Gateway data center project dies after final developer withdraws appeal,” July 2026, wtop.com/prince-william-county/2026/07/digital-gateway-data-center-project-dies-after-final-developer-withdraws-appeal/; American Battlefield Trust, “Victory at Manassas!,” July 2, 2026 (David Duncan statement; conservation plans for the Pageland Lane corridor; the July 4, 2026 semiquincentennial timing), battlefields.org/news/victory-manassas-prince-william-digital-gateway-project-dead-after-developer-drops-appeal; Coalition to Protect Prince William County, July 2, 2026, protectpwc.org/2026/07/02/breaking-news-digital-gateway-is-dead-qts-withdraws/. QTS statements (“after careful consideration”; “a responsible wind-down”) per the cited coverage. Blackstone’s 2021 take-private of QTS: note 100. Sourcing note: the withdrawal rests on the developer’s public statement and

contemporaneous news coverage, uncontested across outlets; the Supreme Court of Virginia docket entry itself had not been retrieved as of July 5, 2026.

[70] “Letter: County residents deserve accountability, not a $2 million legal bill over the Digital Gateway,” Prince William Times (opinion letter), princewilliamtimes.com/opinion/letter-county-residents-deserve-accountability-not-a-2-million-legal-bill-over-the-digital-gateway/article_2329172f-4cd4-4a78-af34-976606f5dd38.html: total Digital Gateway legal costs exceeding $2 million, including the defense of 17 landowner suits challenging reassessments tied to the rezonings. This total is a broader tab and is not the same figure as the rezoning-defense spend reported at the county’s April 2026 withdrawal (about $1.7 million per the county; $1.72 million per InsideNoVa) (notes 63, 123).

[71] “Digital Gateway’s 100-plus landowners remain in limbo as project hangs by a thread,” Prince William Times (Peter Cary), May 6, 2026: contingent contracts unclosed; single QTS closing (January 2024); Compass winding down contracts over three to five months; tax circumstances of contracted parcels. Land reassessment figures ($1.5 million to $329,000 per acre; $100 home assessments): The Center Square.

[72] U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, Ghadban v. GW Acquisition Co., LLC, No. 1:26-cv-00453 (complaint February 16, 2026; cause shown on the docket, “28:1332 Diversity-Declaratory Judgment”); stay order of Judge Leonie M. Brinkema, May 22, 2026, with joint status report due October 30, 2026. InsideNoVa, “Pageland Lane landowners’ lawsuit against Digital Gateway developer QTS on hold,” June 5, 2026; Potomac Local, June 5, 2026.

[73] InsideNoVa, “Pageland Lane landowners’ lawsuit against Digital Gateway developer QTS on hold,” insidenova.com/news/prince_william/pageland-lane-landowners-lawsuit-against-digital-gateway-developer-qts-on-hold/article_9f668ff3-8103-458d-a785-7d9a222165ab.html; stay order and status-report deadline per note 72. Docket read November 24, 2026 through CourtListener’s RECAP mirror, whose last known filing is April 27, 2026, and PacerMonitor’s mirror (notes 74-75); entries 38 and 40-51 were not read.

[74] Ghadban v. GW Acquisition Co., LLC, No. 1:26-cv-00453 (E.D. Va.), docket entries 22 (Motion for Joinder, April 13, 2026), and 33 (Motion to Dismiss, with proposed order), 34 (Memorandum in Support) and 35 (Sealed Memorandum in Support), the last three filed April 24, 2026, and the April 27, 2026 entry setting motion deadlines, as mirrored at courtlistener.com/docket/72283843, read November 24, 2026; the filings themselves were not read. Filer of entry 33: PacerMonitor’s docket text, as indexed by a web search on November 24, 2026, “MOTION to Dismiss by Mary Ann Ghadban,” with a May 14, 2026 reply (entry 39)

“re33 MOTION to Dismiss filed by Mary Ann Ghadban.” PacerMonitor’s parties list (last checked August 15, 2026) shows GW Acquisition Co., LLC as counter-claimant and the landowner plaintiffs as counter-defendants.

[75] PacerMonitor public docket, Ghadban v. GW Acquisition Co., LLC, No. 1:26-cv-00453 (E.D. Va.), pacermonitor.com/public/case/63145592, read November 24, 2026 (docket last updated November 23, 2026): entry 52, September 11, 2026, “STIPULATION of Dismissal by GW Acquisition Co., LLC.”; entry 53, September 14, 2026, 3 pp., “Consent Order of Dismissal in re52 Stipulation of Dismissal. Signed by District Judge Leonie M. Brinkema on 9/14/2026.”; case “Terminated: Sep 14, 2026.” PacerMonitor mirrors PACER docket text; the stipulation and order were not read.

[76] Prince William Times, May 1, 2026: roughly half of the approximately twelve landowner parties under contract with QTS, holding about 812 acres, seeking to exit.

[77] Court of Appeals of Virginia, William Caparoula, et al. v. Board of County Supervisors, Record No. 1137-24-4, memorandum opinion by Judge Lisa M. Lorish (unpublished), September 16, 2025; panel: Judges Raphael, Lorish, Frucci. Circuit Court dismissal: Judge Carroll A. Weimer Jr., June 2024. WUSA9; InsideNoVa (September 22, 2025); Prince William Times.

[78] Amazon Data Services purchase of 189 of 270 Devlin acres, $700 million, closed November 5, 2025: Virginia Business; Northern Virginia Magazine (November 4, 2025); Data Center Dynamics. Entitlement: up to 3.5 million sq ft and three substations. No groundbreaking reported as of June 12, 2026.

[79] April 17, 2018 board budget session (Stewart proposal, $1.25 to $3.70): Candland quotation per Rich Miller, “Prince William County Rethinks Data Center Tax Hikes,” Data Center Frontier, April 19, 2018; the hike failed 6-2 on April 24, 2018. February 2019: board voted 4-2, Candland in favor, to open talks with the industry on a multi-year increase; April 2019: Stewart-Candland five-year plan ($1.25 to $2.00, stepping to $2.50) announced, “sweetheart” deal remark, advertise motion failed. InsideNoVa (Emily Sides, April 16, 2019); Bristow Beat; WTOP (April 2019). Rate-history context: PFM Data Center Fiscal Impact Analysis (June 2022). The 2018-2019 initiatives were Stewart-led, with Candland a prominent supporter and 2019 co-author.

[80] See note 26.

[81] See note 25.

[82] The opinion letter, on Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney letterhead and signed by Ashworth, is dated May 23, 2022, and is online in full as Exhibit H (pages 47-51) of the Candland recall petition, long version: protectpwc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Candland-petition-long-version-with-full-perjury-statement.pdf. The petition body and contemporaneous accounts describe the opinion as rendered May 20, 2022; this study cites the letter's own date.

[83] InsideNoVa (Nolan Stout), June 28, 2022: recall effort launched; WTOP, same date. Coalition to Protect PWC; Elena Schlossberg identified as organizer. Threshold: 1,796 signatures. Signature counts (4,338 collected June-December 2022; more than 1,900 validated at resignation): Coalition recall hub, protectpwc.org/2022/06/29/candland-recall-petition/.

[84] Commonwealth's Attorney Amy Ashworth, second opinion received December 9, 2022. Washington Post (December 10, 2022); WTOP.

[85] Candland resignation announced December 10, 2022, effective December 16, 2022. Prince William Times (Daniel Berti); Washington Post; WTOP; Potomac Local; Coalition to Protect PWC.

[86] LSI Communications/LSI 360 employment documented by March 2023: InsideNoVa; Prince William Times; Bristow Beat. Firm founded March 2022 by Travis Turner of Warrenton; engaged for Digital Gateway communications work; represents Pageland Lane landowners: InsideNoVa (December 10, 2025); Prince William Times (April 29, 2026).

[87] Supervisor Jeanine Lawson (R-Brentsville), press conference September 20, 2023. InsideNoVa (Ben Peters); Potomac Local (Uriah Kiser, September 21, 2023).

[88] Ben Peters, "Virginia State Police rules former Prince William supervisor's data center consulting lawful," InsideNoVa, February 14, 2024, quoting the Commonwealth's Attorney's December 2023 notification to Lawson and Candland's statement.

[89] Virginia Code § 2.2-3104 (state officers); Virginia Code § 15.2-515 (counties under the County Executive form, population over 100,000; one-year post-service restriction by ordinance). Text verified at law.lis.virginia.gov, June 12, 2026.

[90] Prince William County Code, Chapter 2, Article III.A, Sections 2-51 through 2-53 (Ordinance No. 91-69, June 4, 1991; amended Ordinance No. 99-16, March 9, 1999). Municode, Code of Ordinances, current through approximately May 1, 2026. Section 2-51(b) permits board waiver by resolution; Section 2-53 makes violation a misdemeanor.

[91] Robl opinion: InsideNoVa, September 20, 2023 (2019 County Attorney opinion referencing “state and county revolving door laws”). LSI’s consultation of counsel before hiring Candland: InsideNoVa (September 20, 2023); an October 2023 Bristow Beat report describes the same consultation.*

[92] InsideNoVa (Stacy Shaw), “Prince William School Board member working for data center lobbying firm tied to Digital Gateway,” December 10, 2025; Bristow Beat (Stacy Shaw), December 9, 2025. Tredinnick confirmed the employment by phone on December 4, 2025.

[93] Potomac Local News, “‘I Follow the Law:’ Tredinnick Pushes Back on Conflict-of-Interest Questions Over LSI Job,” December 10, 2025, including Lateef’s comments.

[94] Cultural resources assessment and project identity: Washington Business Journal reporting via InsideNoVa/Fauquier Now, December 18-19, 2025; Virginia Business (Josh Janney), December 18, 2025. Formal CPA filing confirmed against the county Development Application Processing Schedule (eservice.pwcgov.org/planning/documents/daps/daps.pdf, retrieved June 12, 2026): CPA2026-00012, “Dulles South Innovation Center,” submitted March 3, 2026, 1,939.91 acres, AF and MU-1 to I-3, Gainesville District, main GPIN 7400-76-0897; no Planning Commission or board hearing dates assigned. Also: Prince William Times (Peter Cary), April 29, 2026. Earlier reporting rounded the assemblage to 1,930 acres.

[95] Tredinnick email to the “Robin Homes Community”: “We are still targeting a Board of County Supervisors vote in Q4 2026.” InsideNoVa (December 10, 2025); Bristow Beat (December 9, 2025).

[96] Board Brief, July 7, 2026, item 11.D: “Deny a Request to Defer Consideration of Comprehensive Plan Amendment #CPA2026-00012, Dulles South Innovation Center,” 7-1 (Angry against), then “Deny the Initiation of Comprehensive Plan Amendment #CPA2026-00012, Dulles South Innovation Center,” unanimous; both moved by Stewart and seconded by Gordy; Res. Nos. 26-439 and 26-442. Staff recommendation (“Do not initiate”) and the prepared resolution (the Board “hereby declines to initiate”): county Board document for CPA2026-00012, July 7, 2026 meeting.

[97] Peter Cary, “Development offers divide residents in rural Prince William,” Prince William Times, April 29, 2026: at least twelve neighborhoods solicited; contract terms ($1.68 million first acre at Sanders Lane, scaling down; $500,000-per-acre offers elsewhere; payment contingent on final rezoning; “predatory” characterization by Patrick Harders, the Republican candidate in the 2025

Gainesville special election); Corey Stewart's role with LSI; Candland's statement that he left LSI approximately a year earlier; the late-fall 2025 Robin Lane presentation by Candland, Looney, and Tredinnick.

[98] Prince William County Clerk of the Board, Disclosure Forms page: Wheeler SEI filings at pwcva.gov/department/board-county-supervisors/disclosure-forms. The 2022 filing: pwcva.gov/assets/2022-02/2022%20Wheeler%20-%20Redacted.pdf. The 2023 filing: pwcva.gov/assets/2023-02/Wheeler%20-%202023%20SoEI_Redacted.pdf. Investment detail also in the Wheeler Recall Petition, Exhibits A-C, protectpwc.org.

[99] Bristow Beat (July 12, 2022): portfolio growth from 26 disclosed positions (2020 filing) to 66 (2022 filing).

[100] QTS Realty Trust acquisition by Blackstone funds, approximately $10 billion, closed 2021. QTS and Blackstone press releases.

[101] Wheeler 2023 SEI, dated January 22, 2023, covering CY2022. Author's direct review of Schedule C: Blackstone absent, Amazon absent, Microsoft at $50,001-$250,000.

[102] Prince William Times (July 7, 2022): Wheeler statement that she and her husband "have divested ourselves of any interest in the Blackstone Fund." InsideNoVa (July 12, 2022).

[103] Coalition to Protect PWC, recall petition launched July 12, 2022. Bristow Beat; InsideNoVa (both July 12, 2022). Threshold: 11,209 signatures countywide.

[104] Ballotpedia: recall supporters announced March 31, 2023 that the effort would be discontinued in favor of the June primary.

[105] Gainesville Citizens for Smart Growth, letter to County Attorney Michelle Robl, June 29, 2022, protectpwc.org. No confirmation of any FBI investigation located in the public record through June 12, 2026.

[106] Wheeler's defense: InsideNoVa (July 12, 2022); Prince William Times (July 2022); Bristow Beat (July 12, 2022).

[107] Democratic primary, June 20, 2023: Jefferson v. Wheeler, no other candidates. VPAP; Prince William Times; AP.

[108] Jefferson platform: curbing approvals, raising the equipment rate to $3.70, restoring Rural Crescent protections. Prince William Times (June 14, 2023); AP (June 22, 2023).

[109] Q1 2023 fundraising: Wheeler $131,908; Jefferson $36,992. Blue Virginia (April 18, 2023), citing VPAP; Prince William Times (June 14, 2023).

[110] Results: Jefferson 13,496 (52.46%); Wheeler 12,231 (47.54%). Virginia Department of Elections; VPAP.

[111] Matthew Barakat (AP), “Backlash to data centers prompts political upset in Northern Virginia,” June 22, 2023.

[112] Antonio Olivo, Washington Post, June 21, 2023.

[113] Blue Virginia (April 18, 2023).

[114] General election matchup and platforms: DCist/WAMU (Margaret Barthel, November 7, 2023); InsideNoVa.

[115] Virginia Department of Elections, certified November 2023 general election results, Chairman - Board of Supervisors (Prince William County): Jefferson 62,267 (51.70%); Lawson 57,740 (47.94%); write-ins 435; total 120,442. Election-night totals carried by some outlets (60,375 to 56,785) were unofficial. New board seated January 2024.

[116] Board of Supervisors, April 18, 2024: equipment rate from $2.15 to $3.70, vote 7-1. Prince William County, 2024 Data Center Revenue Report; Potomac Local (April 18, 2024); Data Center Dynamics.

[117] TY2025 rate: “Board of County Supervisors Adopts Fiscal Year 2026 Budget,” pwcva.gov, April 22, 2025 (“increased from $3.70 to $4.15”). TY2026 rate: “Board of County Supervisors Adopts FY2027 Budget and Reduces Real Estate Tax Rate,” pwcva.gov, April 2026 (“from $4.15 to $4.50 per $100 valuation”), adopted April 21, 2026.

[118] Mid-County Industrial Park (REZ2024-00006) approved June 4, 2024. InsideNoVa; Data Center Dynamics. See note 147.

[119] Bristow Data Center Campus (Stack Infrastructure; approximately 540,000 sq ft on about 58 acres, Nokesville Road) denied September 9, 2025, 4-2, with the Gainesville seat vacant; reported by the Prince William Times (Evelyn Mejia, “In a rare move, supervisors say no to more data centers in Bristow,” September 10, 2025) as the first time the board denied a rezoning to expand a data center campus outside the area designated for them. InsideNoVa; Potomac Local (September 10, 2025); Prince William Times.

[120] Hornbaker Road data center approved March 3, 2026, 4-3 (rezoning and SUP; approximately 40 acres; 571,000 sq ft; outside the overlay); zoning text amendment initiated the same night, rescinded June 9, 2026 when a revised text

was initiated (note 196). Potomac Local (March 4, 2026); InsideNoVa; Prince William Times. See notes 161 and 195.

[121] Gainesville District special election, November 4, 2025: George Stewart (D) 50.47% (12,579 votes) over Patrick Harders (R) 48.77%. InsideNoVa; Potomac Local. Sworn in November 14, 2025.

[122] Margaret Franklin's election to the House of Delegates (23rd District special election, January 13, 2026) vacated the Woodbridge seat; Jeannie LaCroix (R) won the March 10, 2026 special election. Potomac Local (March 10, 2026); WTOP; InsideNoVa.

[123] Legal costs of approximately $1.7 million (note 63): Prince William Times (April 14, 2026); Virginia Lawyers Weekly (April 22, 2026).

[124] Prince William County, PFM Data Center Fiscal Impact Analysis (June 30, 2022): rate history. TY2023 Data Center Tax Revenue Report, Table 3.

[125] PFM Group Consulting, Prince William County Data Center Fiscal Impact Analysis (dated July 7, 2022 on its cover; file dated June 30, 2022), p. 27: the rate was reduced from $3.70 to $1.50 per $100 in 1999 and to $1.25 in 2001, then raised on April 28, 2020 to $1.35 for FY2021 and $1.50 for FY2022.

[126] Rate progression TY2020 $1.35, TY2021 $1.50, TY2022 $1.65, TY2023 $2.15: Prince William Times (March 13, 2025); WTOP (March 19, 2025); PFM (2022).

[127] Adoption dates and votes: notes 116 and 117; InsideNoVa (Sébastien Kraft, April 23, 2025: personal property levies adopted 7-1, Vega dissenting); Prince William Times (Evelyn Mejia, April 2026: budget and rates adopted with Gordy, LaCroix, and Vega opposed). Tax-year basis: Prince William County assesses personal property situated in the county on January 1 of the tax year; April rate adoptions accompany the budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1. "Department of Finance Tax Rates 2025," pwcva.gov (June 2025).

[128] Loudoun County FY2027 budget adoption release, loudoun.gov, April 7, 2026: general personal property rate $4.15, unchanged for tax years 2026 and 2027. Henrico: $2.60 (Henrico County tax schedules). A $4.25 Loudoun figure in circulation is not supported by any located primary document. The Loudoun release states that the general personal property rate "applies to property in data centers." Fairfax County's business personal property rate for 2025-2026 is $4.57 per $100, with computer equipment valued at 50 percent of cost in the first year, then 35, 20 and 10 percent, then held at 2 percent: Fairfax County Economic Development Authority, "Business Taxes and Fees, 2025-2026," July 2025.

[129] Prince William County, TY2023 Data Center Tax Revenue Report (September 24, 2024), Table 6 (“Tax Revenue contributions from Data Centers by Property Type”): annual totals TY2012-TY2023 as tabulated in Part Six; growth from $6.5M (TY2012) to $166.4M (TY2023).

[130] Prince William County, 2024 Data Center Revenue Report (published June 2025): total $293.7M (+77%); components $144.2M real property, $147.1M business tangible personal property ($123.9M computer equipment and peripherals; $23.2M furniture and fixtures), balance approximately $2.4M in fees and licensing; $51.9M of the gain attributed to the rate increase; data centers at 92.4% of commercial real estate growth and appreciation and 49% of commercial assessments. Preliminary ~$280M figure: InsideNoVa/WTOP (March 19, 2025), superseded. Component detail per the report’s property-type table.

[131] Prince William County, 2025 Data Center Revenue Report (Tax Year 2025; undated, posted at pwcaws.pwcva.gov/assets/2026-07/DataCenterRevenueReport_2025_Final_0.pdf), pp. 1-2 (total $465.9 million, “an increase of 59% over the prior year”; real property $221.8 million; business tangible property $241.4 million including $218.1 million from computer equipment and peripherals; fees and licensing $2.7 million; 92.3 percent of commercial real estate growth and appreciation; ten new buildings in tax year 2025, 55 turnkey and powered-shell data centers, 621 MW added, 1,483 MW turnkey capacity), p. 15 (Table 4, rate history), p. 25 (Table 8, TY2016-TY2025), p. 28 (about 4.5 million square feet under construction). Table 8 gives tax year 2019 as $53.2 million; the TY2023 report (note 129) gives $53.3 million, which the Part Six table keeps.

[132] JLARC, “Data Centers in Virginia,” Report 598 (December 9, 2024): Prince William data center revenue approximately $110M, about 7% of total county revenues; Loudoun 31%.

[133] Proposed FY2027 Budget Presentation, Board of County Supervisors, February 17, 2026, agenda Item 13-A (Legistar attachment), slides 16-18: data center revenue series FY2020 $52.2M to FY2027 $549.7M. Coverage: InsideNoVa, “Prince William homeowners could face $181 tax increase in fiscal 2027,” February 19, 2026 (953% framing; Vega and Stewart arguing for resident tax relief).

[134] Proposed FY2027 Budget Presentation (note 133), “FY 2027 Proposed Data Center Revenue Forecast”: real estate $274.4M (rate $0.906, $30.3B gross taxable value) + computer equipment and peripherals $250.9M (rate $4.15, $6.0B) + furniture and fixtures $24.4M (rate $3.70, $0.7B) = $549.7M, “approximately 28% of the Proposed Total General Revenue Forecast” ($1,955.2M; FY2027 Budget

Summary chapter, pwcva.gov). Corroborated: Potomac Local (February 18, 2026). Computed at proposed rates; adopted-rate total pending (Part Twelve, verification item 2).

[135] Prince William County, FY2027 Budget, adopted April 21, 2026 (pwcva.gov/department/management-and-budget/adopted-budget), full text searched November 24, 2026 for “data center revenue,” “$550” and “peripheral”: no data center revenue total stated. Revenues chapter, “Add Funds to Data Center Stabilization Fund”: $1,000,000 in FY2026, $0 in FY2027.

[136] $18M projected from the $4.15 rate: budget director David Sinclair, via InsideNoVa (April 23, 2025) and WTOP (April 2025).* Stabilization fund: FY2026 Budget, Revenues chapter, “Other County Resources”: “Add Funds to Data Center Stabilization Fund ($1,000,000)” (pwcva.gov/assets/2025-07/aFY26--04--Revenues.pdf), carried at $1.0M in both the FY2025 and FY2026 adopted columns; the FY2027 proposal shows the contribution at $0 (FY2027 Budget Summary chapter). “Data Center Revenue Stabilization Reserve” naming per The Center Square. See Part Twelve, verification item 3.

[137] FY2027 adoption and markup reversal: Prince William Times (Evelyn Mejia), “Supervisors restore nearly all school funding, approve smaller tax cuts for residents,” April 2026; InsideNoVa, “Prince William supervisors vote to restore full funding to county schools,” April 2026; county adoption release (note 117). Real estate rate $0.906 to $0.865; average residential bill reduction approximately $56; school transfer $1.115B (+12.5%, +$123.5M).

[138] $4.50 rate projected to generate approximately $21.47M: Prince William Times, “Prince William supervisors consider a lower real estate tax rate for 2027,” April 10, 2026; Potomac Local, “Data Centers Deliver,” April 16, 2026; consistent with the $313M business tangible property line in the proposed FY2027 budget (Budget Summary chapter).* See Part Twelve, verification item 3.

[139] Prince William County Tax Administration, Business Tangible Property Tax, computer equipment and peripherals depreciation schedule (pwcva.gov): 50%, 35%, 20%, 10%, 5% floor at year five. Restated in the 2024 Data Center Revenue Report. Henrico Schedule 89: 10% floor after four years.

[140] JLARC (2024): exemption cost exceeding $1 billion in FY2024. FY2025 value of $1.6-1.9 billion: VPM/WHRO; WTOP; NBC Washington (2026 budget coverage). Virginia Code § 58.1-609.3(18).

[141] Infrastructure costs documented in county budget narratives; not aggregated as a line item.

[142] BAE Urban Economics (2021): planning staff capacity strain.

[143] PFM Data Center Fiscal Impact Analysis (June 30, 2022). Predates the TY2023-TY2026 rate increases.

[144] JLARC, Report 598 (December 2024): fewer than 2,000 direct permanent data center jobs statewide.

[145] BAE Urban Economics (2021), prototype analysis: 28 permanent jobs and approximately 1,700 construction jobs per 250,000 sq ft facility during a 12-month build.

[146] Yesli Vega (R-Coles District): first elected November 2019, re-elected November 2023. Digital Gateway rezoning vote: note 36.

[147] Mid-County Industrial Park (REZ2024-00006): Planning Commission recommended denial unanimously, April 24, 2024; board approved June 4, 2024, 5-3. InsideNoVa, “Prince William supervisors approve contentious Mid-County Industrial Park data center project”; Data Center Dynamics; board agenda and minutes.

[148] YES PAC Statement of Organization, Virginia Department of Elections, committee ID PAC-24-00062, activity date December 16, 2024. Treasurer and mailing-address detail per InsideNoVa’s review of the filing: “Within the Board of Elections statement of organization for YES PAC, Vega’s home address is listed as the committee’s mailing address, while her chief of staff, Chelsea Quintern, is cited as treasurer and principal custodian of the books.” InsideNoVa, “Vega’s PAC receives $100K from Northern Virginia data center developer,” May 2025; Vega as founder/director per Prince William Times (May 5, 2025). The operative filing is an amended Statement of Organization, changes effective October 6, 2025: treasurer and principal custodian Marina Santos, Manassas; committee mailing address 9890 Liberia Avenue #1166, Manassas; designated for statewide and General Assembly elections, local-elections box unchecked. COMET, cfreports.elections.virginia.gov, committee PAC-24-00062 (committee page and filed SOO PDF, retrieved June 12, 2026).

[149] VPAP, YES PAC (committee 522570): $100,000 from Alejandra Duarte Mulhausen, McLean, received March 28, 2025. InsideNoVa; Prince William Times (May 2025).

[150] Jeff Mulhausen / Minnieville Capital Acquisitions, applicant for Mid-County Industrial Park. Prince William Times; InsideNoVa.

[151] Cher Muzyk and Jill Palermo, “Supervisor’s new PAC gets $100K from data center developer,” Prince William Times, May 5, 2025: “likely the largest single

contribution to any supervisor from an individual in the county's history"; the article notes the largest single-donor contributions in county supervisor races typically run about $10,000. The superlative is the Times' characterization, carries its own hedge, and is not attributed to VPAP.

[152] Sébastien Kraft, "Prince William supervisor's PAC receives another $100K, this time from Dumfries data center backer," InsideNoVa, July 14, 2025: Cooley contribution received July 3, 2025; Cooley's parcel interest near Four Seasons; $10,000 from Atlantic Funding to Angry; $25,000 to Miyares; Vega's denials that donors influence votes.

[153] Pete Candland, $500 to YES PAC, July-December 2025 reporting period. VPAP; Prince William Times (February 15, 2026).

[154] Prince William County Republican Committee Lincoln-Reagan Dinner, May 3, 2025: Cedrus Group $15,000 Platinum sponsorship; head-table photographs provided by activist Bill Wright. Prince William Times; InsideNoVa (May 7, 2025). The 2026 dinner coverage (Potomac Local, May 4, 2026) records no Cedrus sponsorship; absence of mention, not a confirmed absence.

[155] VPAP, YES PAC finance summary, retrieved June 12, 2026 (filings through the June 1, 2026 report covering April 1-May 25, 2026): contributions since inception $333,124; itemized expenses $84,303; cash on hand $248,818. Redwood Condo Investors 25 LLC: $50,000 cash received April 20, 2026, per the committee's large-contribution report (COMET) and the April 1-May 25, 2026 period report (filed June 1, 2026); VPAP donor detail classifies the donor as "Real Estate Developers." Entity: Virginia SCC ID 11167732, formed January 2021, Centreville; registered agent Jason Drakopoulos (Redwood Commercial Management). No located record ties the entity to Prince William land or data center business. See Part Twelve, verification item 1.

[156] InsideNoVa (Sébastien Kraft), interview with Supervisor Yesli Vega, August 31, 2026 (interview held August 10; insidenova.com): the June 28, 2026 Kuhn contribution; JK Land Holdings' renewed Gardner property pitch; Vega on a 2027 decision. YES PAC's reports after the April 1-May 25, 2026 period had not been reviewed as of October 9, 2026 (Part Twelve).

[157] Sequence verified against VPAP filing dates: vote June 4, 2024; PAC organized December 16, 2024; contribution received March 28, 2025.

[158] Treasurer record, resolved by direct COMET inspection (June 12, 2026): the original Statement of Organization named Chelsea Quintern; an amended Statement effective October 6, 2025 names Marina Santos (note 148). The

amendment history reconciles the two names; both were accurate for their dates. COMET also reports a committee payment to Quintern dated October 14, 2025.

[159] Evelyn Mejia, “Supervisors collect nearly $300K in campaign donations – mostly from data center interests,” Prince William Times, February 15, 2026 (updated May 6, 2026): totals and per-supervisor figures as stated in the text; Taproot Collective PAC clarification (May 6, 2026) that the funds originated with a commercial developer; Fairfax and Loudoun comparisons.

[160] Atlantic Funding Limited LLC v. Jefferson, U.S. District Court, E.D. Va. (filed September 2025; voluntarily dismissed October 2025, Judge Patricia Toliver Giles, with the developer citing Cooley’s health). Prince William Times, “Developer behind Four Seasons data center plan drops lawsuit against county chair”; InsideNoVa. Jefferson’s “intimidation action” characterization per the same coverage.

[161] Hornbaker Road vote, March 3, 2026: approved 4-3; dissents Jefferson, Vega, Stewart; SJP Acquisitions (St. John Properties), approximately 40 acres, 571,000 sq ft, outside the overlay. InsideNoVa (Sébastien Kraft, March 4, 2026); Potomac Local; Prince William Times.

[162] Lisa Zargarpur announcement for Coles District Supervisor, May 26, 2026: Potomac Local. All eight board seats on the November 2027 ballot.

[163] Data Center Ordinance Advisory Group disbanded October 7, 2025, 4-2, on Supervisor Angry’s directive; “gut punch” and Jefferson quotation per InsideNoVa, “‘A gut punch’: Prince William supervisors disband resident-led data center advisory group”; Prince William Times.

[164] Noise ordinance adopted on a 5-2 vote (Jefferson and Vega dissenting), late October 2025, C-weighted standard; one-year effectiveness report directed by Supervisor Gordy, due fall 2026. InsideNoVa, “Prince William supervisors greenlight new noise ordinance for businesses, data centers.”

[165] Prince William County Department of Public Works and Police Department, “Noise Ordinance Enforcement,” presentation to the Board of County Supervisors, October 20, 2026, agenda item 11.D, slides 2 and 5-7 (amended ordinance adopted October 28, 2025, effective May 1, 2026; Public Works responsible for steady tonal noise; 19 resident complaints to Public Works, May-September 2026, none above the 73 dB daytime or 68 dB nighttime threshold; zero violations; 58 percent answered within the two-business-day target) and slide 11 (recommendation to return “in the late Spring of 2027”). No action taken: Board Brief, October 20, 2026. The board discussed a noise ordinance update on November 17, 2026 (agenda item 11.C, no action); those materials were not read.

[166] Dominion Energy, Morrisville to Wishing Star project page and 2025 fact sheet (dominionenergy.com): new 500 kV line along approximately 36.5 miles of existing right-of-way, plus 230 kV Anderson Branch-Morrisville line and substation expansion, serving Prince William and Loudoun data center load. CPCN application filed February 27, 2026, SCC Case No. PUR-2026-00021; hearing schedule at note 167. Route refinements October and December 2025, including the revised "Pageland 1" alternative (85-foot western corridor expansion south of Sudley Road): Dominion; FauquierNow.

[167] Virginia State Corporation Commission, Case No. PUR-2026-00021, Hearing Examiner's Ruling, June 29, 2026, granting the American Battlefield Trust's motion to modify the schedule: evidentiary hearing to begin November 16, 2026, continuing November 17-20, 23 and 24 as needed; the published dates for public witness registration and testimony preserved. Public witness hearing: transcript entry "Case heard on 09/30/2026" before Senior Hearing Examiner M. Renae Carter, filed September 30, 2026. Docket re-read November 24, 2026; later rulings are cited where they bear.

[168] Virginia State Corporation Commission, Case No. PUR-2026-00021: Hearing Examiner's Ruling on Motion to Strike, October 28, 2026 (DocID 393212; Senior Hearing Examiner M. Renae Carter), pp. 5-10, listing the stricken testimony of Piedmont Environmental Council, American Battlefield Trust, Fauquier County, Kirkpatrick Farms and Heritage Hunt witnesses: "I conclude that Disputed Testimony on cost allocation itself should be stricken" (p. 8), testimony on "need for the Project, load growth driving that need, and routing" allowable (p. 8), notice reasoning at p. 7; Hearing Examiner's Rulings of October 19 (DocID 392942; Dominion's legal memorandum on Va. Code § 56-585.1:5 not struck, to be argued at the hearing), November 6 (DocID 393455; recording Dominion's representation "that several witnesses have been stipulated by the parties" and that the hearing "is likely to be shorter in duration than initially contemplated") and November 12, 2026 (DocID 393626; written closing briefs denied; "multiple witnesses have been excused from the hearing," and "it is probable this case will take fewer than the originally allotted seven days"). Docket index read November 24, 2026; newest filing November 13, 2026 (DocID 393693).

[169] Battlefield crossing (approximately two miles of NPS land; corridor widening over 100 feet; roughly 25 acres affected near Brawner Farm): Coalition to Protect America's National Parks, NPCA, and PEC letter and statements (July 1, 2025); Rep. Suhas Subramanyam's request for NPS review (press release); PEC, "Transmission line mega-project approval process accelerated without complete review."

[170] PJM, 2022 RTEP Window 3 Reliability Analysis Report (December 2023): window opened for Dominion-zone data center load; more than 85% of zone load growth attributed to data centers.

[171] PJM board action of February 25, 2025: $5.9 billion ($6.7 billion with scope changes), including the multistate 765 kV backbone to be built through Valley Link Transmission Company (AEP, Dominion, FirstEnergy), in-service target 2029, Virginia CPCN filing expected summer 2026 (Utility Dive; Loudoun County transmission projects page). Subsequent $11.8 billion PJM expansion with approximately $4.8 billion in the Dominion zone: Data Center Dynamics; Utility Dive.

[172] SCC DocketSearch case index, read October 9, 2026, current to cases established October 8, 2026: no case whose name or caption contains “Valley Link,” “Joshua Falls,” “Yeat,” or “765” is a certificate application for the line; the one Valley Link case, PUR-2025-00220 (established December 3, 2025), is an application for approval of affiliate agreements under Chapter 4 of Title 56.

[173] Board Brief, September 22, 2026: item 13.A, “Deny Special Use Permit #SUP2025-00009, Vint Hill Substation - Brentsville Magisterial District,” moved by Gordy, seconded by Boddye, unanimous, Res. No. 26-571; item 11.F, “Petition the Governor and Virginia Department of Environmental Quality for Inclusion of Mid-County and Western Prince William County in Regional Groundwater Studies and Future Groundwater Management Frameworks,” moved by Boddye, seconded by Bailey, unanimous, Res. No. 26-570.

[174] Virginia State Corporation Commission, final order in Case No. PUR-2025-00058 (November 25, 2025) and accompanying news release: GS-5 class for demand of 25 MW and above, effective January 1, 2027; 14-year contract terms; minimum demand charges of 85% (distribution and transmission) and 60% (generation); three years’ notice for demand reductions; base-rate increases of $565.7M (2026) and $209.9M (2027) approved against requests of $822M and $345M; average residential impact +$11.24/month (2026). Virginia Mercury (November 25, 2025); Cardinal News (November 26, 2025); Inside Climate News (January 7, 2026).

[175] Virginia State Corporation Commission, Case No. PUR-2026-00056, Final Order, July 31, 2026 (Rider T1): amended line extension policy requiring “a mandatory CIAC for defined types of transmission facilities,” to be filed in a new docket within 90 days; limited “prospectively and only to ‘direct connect’” facilities serving new or expanding large-load customers; the Commission “may use the upcoming docket to also consider” approaches under which higher-order transmission costs “are directly assigned to the GS-5” class.

[176] Dominion large-load interconnection filing, SCC Case No. PUR-2026-00011 (February 2026): request queue of approximately 70 GW as of December 31, 2025. Filing PDF; Virginia Business.

[177] Dominion Energy Virginia, 2025 Integrated Resource Plan (filed October 2025): load approximately doubling by 2039 (~5.5%/year); data center forecast +17% (+7 GW) over the 2024 IRP; transmission capital impact estimated at $28.3 billion. Virginia Mercury (October 22, 2025); PEC analysis. Capacity under contract approximately 40 GW: Data Center Dynamics.

[178] Chesterfield Energy Reliability Center: 944 MW, $1.47 billion, approved November 25, 2025; first new gas plant since the VCEA; commercial operation target 2029. SCC; Virginia Mercury; Inside Climate News (December 5, 2025).

[179] JLARC, Report 598 (December 2024): unconstrained scenario adds an estimated $14 to $37 per month (constant dollars) to a typical Dominion residential bill by 2040; upper bound approximately $444 per year. Modeling by E3.

[180] PJM 2025/26 base residual auction: Dominion zone $444.26/MW-day against a prior-year DOM clearing of $28.92/MW-day, a 1,436% increase; the 833% figure circulating for this auction is the Rest-of-RTO increase, not the Dominion zone's. Independent Market Monitor attribution: 63% of the increase (~$9.3 billion) to data centers; ~40% of capacity costs in the subsequent auction, including ~$6.2 billion tied to data centers not yet built. Monitoring Analytics via Utility Dive; IEEFA.

[181] SB 253 (Lucas), 2026 Acts ch. 1124, signed May 14, 2026, effective July 1, 2026. LIS; Virginia Mercury (May 18, 2026).

[182] Fairfax Water salinity reporting (Occoquan levels routinely exceeding federal taste/low-sodium advisory levels): FFXnow (January 6, 2025); Fairfax County environmental materials; Occoquan Watershed Monitoring Laboratory (Virginia Tech). UOSA discharge characterization: Prince William Water FAQ (note 22).

[183] Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin: Northern Virginia data centers consumed approximately 2 billion gallons in 2023, +63% over 2019, about 3% of basin consumption.

[184] Virginia Mercury, "Study shows potential future vulnerabilities in D.C. area water supply," December 18, 2025.

[185] Prince William County, 2024 Data Center Revenue Report (June 2025), inventory sections, as reported by Evelyn Mejia, "Report: Prince William County has 44 data centers, 15 more on the way," Prince William Times, August 5, 2025: 44 operating (June 30, 2025); 15 under construction; ~12 million sq ft operating

(275 acres of footprint); 4,000+ acres total; 862 MW consumed in FY2024 (+240 MW); ~660 MW expected from construction pipeline (+76%); assessments $8.7B operating, $1.2B under construction, $2.9B vacant zoned land; land sales to $3.8M/acre.

[186] Northern Virginia operating capacity above 4,900 MW (mid-2025): WTOP (June 2025). Loudoun as largest county market (~6 GW operating and under construction) and Prince William as Virginia's second-largest and fastest-growing: Data Center Dynamics analysis; Mordor Intelligence (PWC at nearly 7 million sq ft capacity, ~30 million sq ft under development).

[187] Prince William Times analysis (February 2024): projection that Prince William would eventually overtake Loudoun at full buildout (Loudoun then 160+ buildings/31M sq ft; PWC 44 buildings/8.3M sq ft).* Projection, not measurement.

[188] Prince William County news release, "Prince William County launches interactive data center map to improve public access to development information" (February 2026); InsideNoVa (Sébastien Kraft, February 23, 2026); WTOP (February 16, 2026), including Schlossberg's assessment; Northern Virginia Magazine (February 12, 2026).

[189] Prince William Times, "Data center projects move into eastern Prince William," May 12, 2026; "Developers pitch 4 data centers at the edge of Prince William Forest Park"; Potomac Local (May 13 and May 21, 2026); WJLA; Patch. Cooley-Peterson joint venture split: April 2026, per the same coverage.

[190] InsideNoVa, "'A major concern': Eastern Prince William residents denounce new data center proposals," June 2026 (June 2, 2026 protest at the McCoart Building).

[191] Quantico Ridge withdrawal from scheduled hearing, May 12, 2026: Data Center Dynamics; WTOP/InsideNoVa ("shelved for now").

[192] Prince William County Development Services ePortal (egcss.pwcgov.org), searches "Quantico Ridge" and "Six Towers," read November 24, 2026: REZ2026-00038 (Quantico Ridge Rezoning) and SUP2026-00029 (Quantico Ridge Special Use Permit), applied April 28, 2026, status Withdrawn, completion June 9, 2026; CPA2026-00005, "Comprehensive Plan Amendment - (QUANTICO RIDGE (formally Potomac Technology Park))," on the same main parcel (GPIN 7991-04-7237) as the rezoning and special use permit, applied November 4, 2025, status Withdrawn, completion August 10, 2026; REZ2026-00019, Six Towers Industrial Park, applied November 7, 2025, status Pending (REZ2026-00017, same project, Voided). Land swap: Daniel Berti, "Prince William Forest Park land swap considered for data centers," Prince William Times, July 23, 2026 (the page shows

an update of October 19, 2026); the National Park Service and the Department of the Interior did not comment to the paper, and the article cites no federal notice; a web search of Federal Register and National Park Service sources on November 24, 2026 found none.

[193] InsideNoVa (Sébastien Kraft), September 29, 2026, on the Four Seasons-area applications (insidenova.com): Atlantic Funding LLC, 60 acres at 16251 Dumfries Road, special use permit and proffer amendment, submitted May 22, 2026; Southgate Business LLC, 79 acres, rezoning, proffer amendment and special use permit, submitted June 3, 2026; staff comments as quoted by the paper; 45 days to revise; no Planning Commission hearing scheduled. The county's comment letters are filed on its ePortal and were not read.

[194] Prince William County Development Services ePortal, read November 24, 2026: REZ2026-00041 and SUP2026-00033, Atlantic Funding Development, applied May 22, 2026, status Pending, one plan submittal (received May 22, comments completed July 23, 2026), attachment "Case Planner Review Comments (S1) - Atlantic Funding Development REZ-PRA & SUP (9-14-26), Final" uploaded September 16, 2026; REZ2026-00044 and SUP2026-00035, Southgate South, applied June 3, 2026, status Pending, one plan submittal (received June 3, completed July 24, 2026), attachment "Case Planner Review Comments (S1) - Southgate South REZ-PRA & SUP (9-9-26), Final" uploaded September 10, 2026. No second submittal on either record. The letters were not opened; their dates are taken from the file names. Planning Commission agendas for October 14, November 18 and December 9, 2026 (pwcva.gov), read November 24, 2026, list neither case; the October 28 agenda was not read.

[195] Prince William County Planning Office, "DPA2026-00006: Data Center Opportunity Zone Overlay District (DCOZOD)" (pwcva.gov): special use permit requirement, overlay redefinition around five eligibility pathways, M-2-plus-SUP path outside the overlay; staff/committee stage, no public hearing held as of June 12, 2026. Initiation: March 3, 2026 (Potomac Local, March 4, 2026). Analysis: Venable LLP client alert, April 2026.

[196] Prince William Board of County Supervisors, Board Brief (the county's action summary), June 9, 2026: "Initiate a Zoning Text Amendment to the Data Center Opportunity Zone Overlay District and Related Sections to Amend the Data Center Uses Permitted by Right and by Special Use Permit," moved by Gordy, seconded by Boddye, unanimous, Vega absent from the vote, Res. No. 26-374. The May 19, 2026 pause (DIR 26-11), the postponement of the June 10 Planning Commission hearing, and the June 9 rescission of the March 3 initiation (Res. No. 26-125): Planning Office staff report to the Board for September 22, 2026, DPA2026-00006,

executive summary and background (eservice.pwcgov.org/planning/documents/bocs//DPA2026-00006.pdf).

[197] Board Brief, September 22, 2026: DPA2026-00006 approved, moved by Gordy, seconded by Vega, unanimous, Ord. No. 26-67 with Res. Nos. 26-557, 26-558 and 26-559; the substitute "to Reflect a Change in Language from 90 Calendar Days to 0 Calendar Days," moved by Stewart, seconded by Gordy, failed 3-5 (ayes Boddye, Gordy, Stewart; nays Angry, Bailey, Jefferson, LaCroix, Vega). Adopted ordinance as summarized by the Planning Office, "DPA2026-00006: Data Center Opportunity Zone Overlay District (DCOZOD)" (pwcva.gov): overlay closed to future expansion; five eligibility pathways for properties in the overlay as of September 21, 2026, four with a deadline of the adoption date and the fifth 90 days after; updated boundary map after December 21, 2026; special use permit required outside the overlay in B-1, O(L), O(H), O(M), O(F), M-1, M-2, M/T and designated PBD and PMD land bays. The same page reports the Planning Commission's September 9 recommendation of a 120-day period and a 500-foot setback for fifth-pathway development. Acreage: staff report for September 22 (note 196), Attachment A, "as of August 31, 2026": approximately 232 qualifying parcels totaling roughly 3,641 acres, "a reduction of about 6,057 acres, or approximately 62 percent." A pre-adoption staff count, not the adopted map. Ordinance: Ord. No. 26-67, September 22, 2026, moved by Gordy, seconded by Vega; ayes Angry, Bailey, Boddye, Gordy, Jefferson, LaCroix, Stewart, Vega; with its attachment amending County Code Sec. 32-509.01 et seq. and the related district use lists. The fifth eligibility criterion runs to "11:59 P.M. on [90 calendar days from date of ordinance adoption]"; data centers outside the qualifying overlay are permitted "by special use permit" in B-1, O(L), O(H), O(M), O(F), M-1, M-2, M/T and designated PBD and PMD land bays; the attachment contains no setback provision.

[198] Prince William County Department of Development Services, Land Development Division, memorandum "Data Center Site Plan Submission Pre-Amended Data Center Overlay," October 16, 2026, to Industry Partners, NVBIA, CREDA, CDC (pwcva.gov/assets/2026-10/DataCenterSitePlanSubmissionsMemorandum.pdf), 1 p.: "The Ordinance will become effective 90 days after September 22, 2026, or December 21, 2026"; "Accepted means that the site plan has been uploaded via ePortal or submitted at the Land Counter, and quality control of the uploaded documents has been completed." The memo's effective-date wording sits beside the Planning Office's statement that four eligibility pathways closed on the adoption date (note 197); both put the fifth pathway's close at December 21. The amended overlay map had not been published as of November 24, 2026.

[199] Prince William Times, May 12, 2026 (note 189): “Although construction has not yet begun, the Mid-County Industrial Park was approved for three data center[s] on land that once held the Colchester Industrial Park.” Site plan and grading records are on the county ePortal (Part Twelve, verification item 5).

[200] Amazon Data Services purchases, February 2026: 44 acres (Wellington Road/Devlin Road parcels) for $120 million; adjacent former Merrifield Garden Center site sold to a different data center developer for $160 million. InsideNoVa; Data Center Dynamics.

[201] Iron Mountain VA-8/9 rezoning approved July 29, 2025 (InsideNoVa). AWS Dean Drive/Nokesville Road campus construction begun during site plan review: Data Center Dynamics.

[202] MultiState, “Virginia Lawmakers Pass 15 Data Center Bills as Tax Exemption Fight Looms,” March 30, 2026; Virginia Mercury (April 22, 2026): Spanberger signed the session’s data center bills, vetoing none.

[203] HB 507 (McAuliff, D-Fauquier), 2026 Acts ch. 397, approved April 8, 2026, effective July 1, 2026. LIS, session 20261, bill history and summary as passed; Virginia Mercury (Shannon Heckt), “Data center bills dominated this year’s General Assembly. Here’s what passed,” March 17, 2026.

[204] HB 153 (Thomas, D-Prince William), 2026 Acts ch. 567, and SB 94 (Roem, D-Manassas), 2026 Acts ch. 568, both approved April 13, 2026, effective July 1, 2026. LIS histories: conference reports adopted March 14, 2026 (House 93-2 and 91-4; Senate 29-10); conference dropped the Senate’s industrial-zoning requirement. Quotations: Virginia Mercury (March 17, 2026); WSET/WJLA (March 19, 2026). Predecessors HB 1601/SB 1449 (2025) vetoed by Governor Youngkin May 2, 2025 (LIS 20251; Cardinal News, May 6, 2025).

[205] SB 553 (Srinivasan, D-Loudoun), 2026 Acts ch. 896, and HB 496 (Guzman, D-Prince William), 2026 Acts ch. 623, both approved April 13, 2026, effective January 1, 2027. LIS summaries as passed.

[206] See note 181.

[207] Virginia Mercury, “New state law mandates review of Dominion’s load forecasting as data centers raise concerns,” April 30, 2026.

[208] LIS, session 20261: HB 154 (left in committee), HB 155 (laid on table), HB 166 (Thomas; noise ordinances, removing the exemption for industrial property; continued to 2027); SB 93 and SB 336 (continued to 2027); HB 503 (McAuliff) and SB 466 (Stuart), utility cost allocation, continued to 2027.

[209] Budget impasse and exemption: HB 30 history (continued to 2026 Special Session I, March 14, 2026; “Continued from last session,” April 22, 2026), LIS. Exemption value: Inside Climate News (Charles Paullin), “Data Center Tax Exemption Changes Still Holding Up Virginia Budget,” April 24, 2026; VPM/WHRO; NBC Washington (May 19, 2026).

[210] Positions and quotations: Inside Climate News (April 24, 2026: Lucas’s January end date, $1.6B revised ask, “Where are they going?”; House conditions modeled on HB 897, which passed the House 61-34 on February 17, 2026 and was passed by indefinitely 15-0 in Senate Finance on March 3, 2026); Cardinal News (Dwayne Yancey), “Spanberger on data centers: ‘I’m not going to break a contract the state has signed,’” May 28, 2026 (also “absolutely unacceptable” July 1 remark); WTOP (Scott Gelman), June 9, 2026 (June 5 meeting; Lucas’s “Data Center Diva and Amazon Don” post; Surovell on a “skinny budget”; House returns June 18, Senate June 22).

[211] Special Session I convened and recessed April 23, 2026: Virginia Mercury. Shutdown framing: NBC Washington (May 19, 2026); WTOP (June 9, 2026); WHRO/VPM (June 12, 2026). Appropriation act expires June 30, 2026.

[212] Finance Secretary Mark Sickles’s reading from the Digital Gateway developer’s withdrawal letter to Senate Finance (“the current legislative and political environment in Virginia no longer reflects the kind of partnership that makes these investments viable”): NBC Washington, May 19, 2026. Budget bill patron and lead House conferee Luke Torian (D-Prince William): LIS, HB 30.

[213] Coalition to Protect Prince William County, Data Center Reform Lobby Day, February 9, 2026, Richmond (protectpwc.org). Schlossberg assessment of the session: WSET/WJLA, March 19, 2026.

[214] Williams Mullen, “Virginia Budget Creates New Electricity Consumption Tax for Data Centers,” williamsmullen.com/insights/news/legal-news/virginia-budget-creates-new-electricity-consumption-tax-data-centers: budget signed June 30, 2026; $0.011/kWh tax on data center electricity consumption effective July 1, 2026; approximately $600 million per year to the general fund with collections above that refunded pro rata; expires June 30, 2028 absent extension; sales-and-use exemption preserved. Enacted text: 2026 Appropriation Act, HB30, Chapter 1, Item 3-5.24, “Data Center Electricity Consumption Tax” (budget.lis.virginia.gov/item/2026/2/HB30/Chapter/3/3-5.24/): subsection A (rate; on and after July 1, 2026 and before July 1, 2028), C and D ($600,000,000 general fund deposit limit; excess to a nonreverting fund; pro rata refunds).

Asterisks (*) mark claims resting on secondary sources or single sources pending primary verification; each is cross-referenced to a Part Twelve verification item.

END OF CASE STUDY

Prince William County, Virginia

November 2026, v3.3