

Definitions associated with Data Centers

Data Center

A facility, or portion thereof, primarily designed or used to house computer servers and related information technology infrastructure for the storage, processing, management, or transmission of electronic data. A Data Center may include, but is not limited to, server racks, data storage systems, cooling systems, power conditioning equipment, substations, uninterruptible power supplies, backup generators, telecommunications equipment, security systems, and associated mechanical and electrical infrastructure.

For zoning and regulatory purposes, Data Centers shall be classified based on maximum electrical demand, expressed in megawatts (MW), rather than building size.

A use shall be classified as a Data Center where either:

- (a) more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the gross floor area is devoted to server racks, stationary computing equipment, or associated mechanical or electrical infrastructure; or
- (b) the primary purpose of the facility, as determined by the Building Commissioner or designee, is the housing and operation of computer servers and related infrastructure, regardless of floor area allocation.

Enterprise or Colocation (Colo) Data Center – A facility in which multiple customers lease space, equipment areas, or “racks” within a shared infrastructure environment operated by a specialized provider, with common power, cooling, telecommunications, and backup systems.

Edge or Micro Data Center – A smaller-scale facility designed to serve localized or network edge functions, typically occupying significantly less floor area and operating with minimal on-site personnel.

Hyperscale Data Center – A very large-scale facility typically operated by a single entity for cloud computing, large-scale data processing, or enterprise services, characterized by substantial electricity demand, extensive mechanical cooling systems, and limited on-site staffing.

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Categories of Data Centers

- (1) Tier I – Low-Impact Data Center:** A facility with a maximum projected electrical demand of two (2) megawatts (MW) or less at full build-out, measured as the combined electrical load of all tenants and facility operations. On-site generation capacity shall be included in the calculation of electrical demand, except for on-site solar generation. Tier I facilities are typically associated with localized network, enterprise, or edge computing functions.
- (2) Tier II – Moderate-Impact Data Center:** A facility with a maximum projected electrical demand greater than 2 MW but not exceeding 10 MW at full build-out. These facilities may include multi-tenant or colocation environments and require substantial utility coordination.
- (3) Tier III – High-Impact Data Center:** A facility with a maximum projected electrical demand exceeding 10 MW at full build-out. These facilities are commonly associated with hyperscale or campus- scale computing operations and may require major electrical infrastructure expansion.