News Release

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Data Centers Workgroup Recommends
Updates to County Ordinance

FREDERICK, Md. – Frederick County's Data Centers Workgroup today released its final report. Appointed by Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater, the 11-member workgroup spent seven months examining existing laws and other issues related to this relatively new and rapidly changing industry. County Council Member Renee Knapp and Mobilize Frederick Executive Director Karen Cannon co-chair the workgroup. Subgroups focused on siting, sustainability, and community benefits.

The group's report calls for revisions to the County's Critical Digital Infrastructure (CDI) ordinance. Recommended changes to the ordinance include:

- Creation of a CDI Floating Zone that can be applied within areas zoned as general or light industrial (GI and LI);
- Stricter setback, lighting and vegetative replacement requirements;
- Inclusion of sustainability goals and plans.

Other recommendations in the report include updating sound management regulations, considering a high energy use surcharge, reviewing viewshed and soil regulations, discussing incentives to ensure industry compliance with sustainability goals, and continually monitoring industry trends to inform policymakers.

The report also identified other issues that may require significant local, state, and regional support to address. They include:

- Overall limit on data center development in Frederick County
- Power consumption and climate goals
- Power generation
- Power transmission expansion
- Water consumption
- Monitoring and enforcement of key metrics (e.g. noise, air quality, water usage, stormwater management)
- Emergency responder training

Executive Fitzwater created the workgroup in response to recommendations from two Transition Team committees – Economic Development; and Sustainability, Infrastructure and Transportation. The goal was to convene stakeholders to develop a model for critical data infrastructure that leverages the benefits data centers can provide while protecting the environment and Frederick County's quality of life.

The full report can be found online at www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/DataCenters.

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