FORT WORTH CITY COUNCIL · NOVEMBER 10, 2026

The Future of Data Centers in Fort Worth

Report of the Data Center & Infrastructure Commission

Dr. Mike Slattery, Chair

WHY THIS MATTERS

The most consequential and contested land use and infrastructure issue facing our city today.

Not only Fort Worth

…cities across the country who are facing the same decisions.

A skeptical public

…and often angry.

Getting the science right

…absolutely mattered.



WHAT WE HEARD · WHAT WE FOUND

You raised it. We researched it.

What we heard	What the evidence shows
“The grid can’t handle it” / “Ratepayers face no risk”	Neither is supported. Requests far exceed what will be built, and cost allocation is still being decided.
“They drink our water” / “They use none”	It depends on the cooling design. Much of the footprint can be indirect.
“Thousands of jobs, a tax windfall” / “No jobs, a giveaway”	Construction jobs are many but temporary; operating jobs are few but well paid. Net tax value depends on the deal.
“You can’t hear them” / “They hum all night”	The science of sound is well understood, but real levels at homes are poorly documented.

THE CHARGE

Produce a comprehensive, fact-based, non-advocacy evaluation of data center development.

1

Review the evidence

Across four research pillars.

2

Say what is settled and what is not

Plainly, so Council and residents can tell the difference.

3

Recommend policy

Grounded in what the City has the authority to do.

WHO DID THE WORK

Commissioners and subject-matter experts.

11

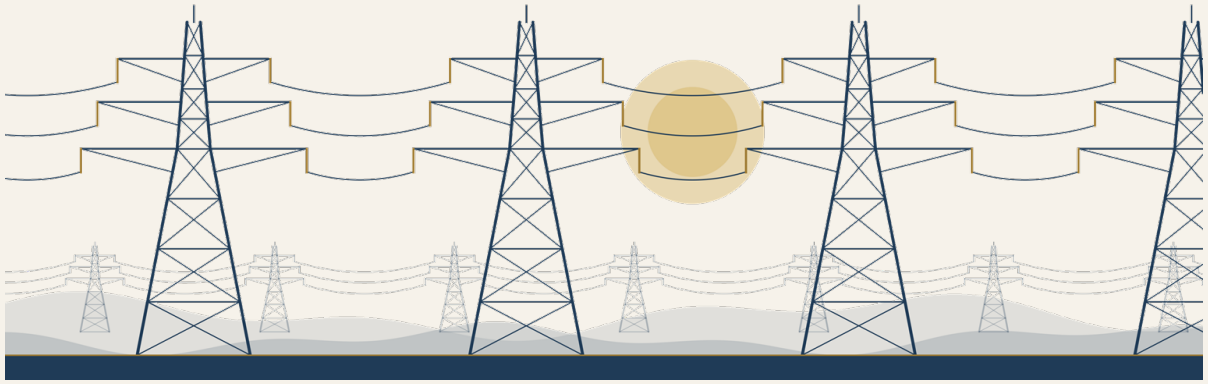
Voting Commissioners

+10

Subject-Matter Experts

With City Staff in support

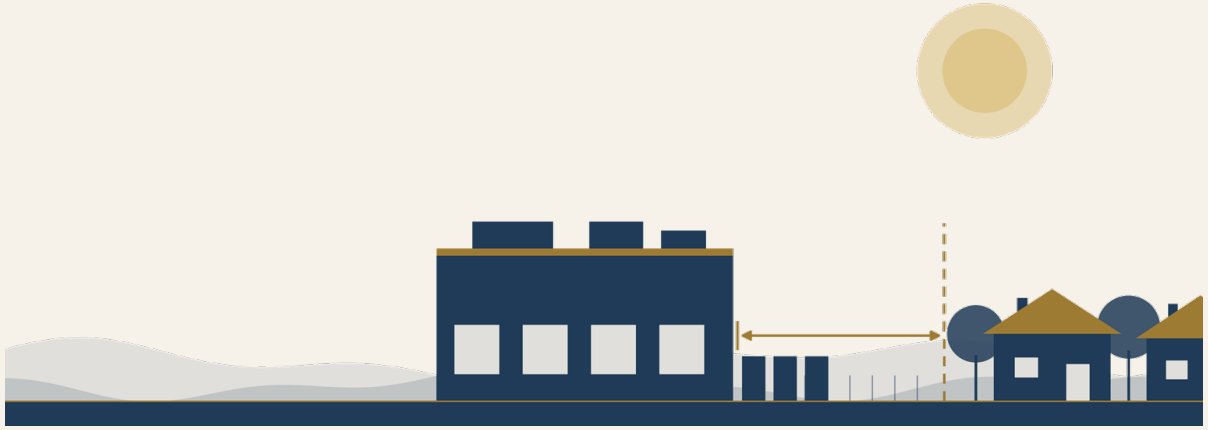
PILLAR 1
ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY RELIABILITY



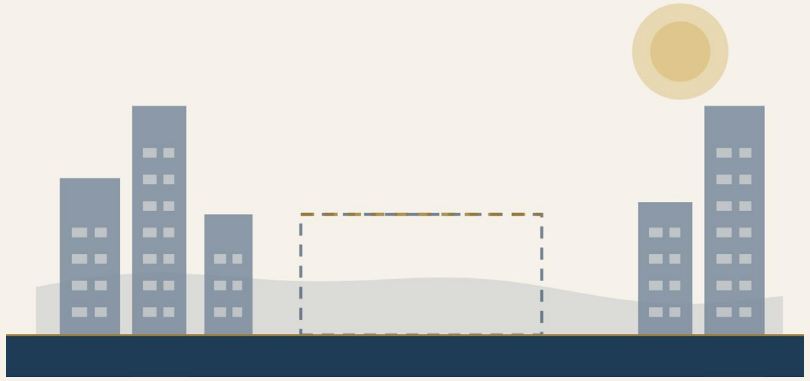
PILLAR 2
WATER USE AND LOCAL RESOURCES



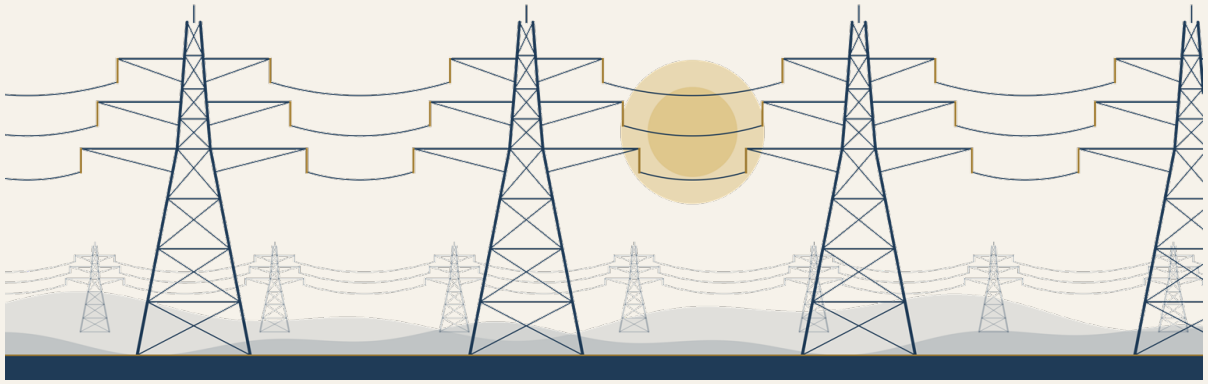
PILLAR 3
LAND USE, SITING, AND NEIGHBORHOOD IMPACTS



PILLAR 4
ECONOMIC IMPACTS



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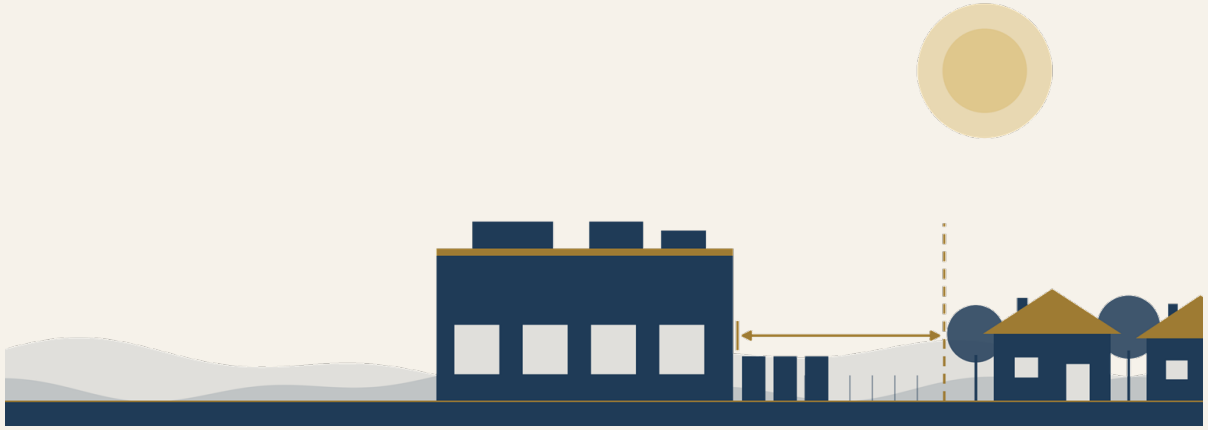
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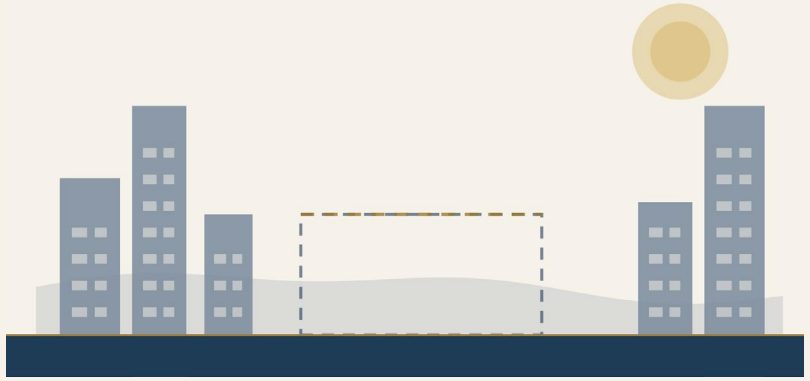
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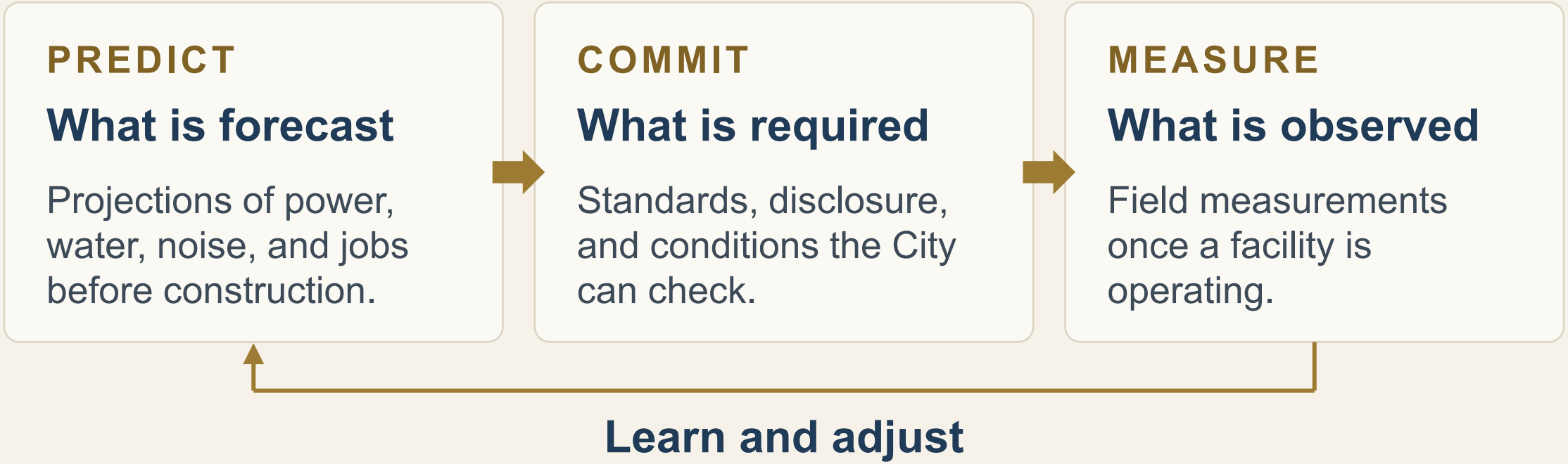
THE CENTRAL CHALLENGE

AI is moving faster than the evidence.

So we sorted every question into what is settled, what is uncertain, and what Fort Worth can do about it today.

THE PRINCIPLE BEHIND OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

From forecasts to verified performance.



THE RECOMMENDATIONS

19 recommendations across four pillars.

2

Electricity and energy reliability

5

Water use and local resources

8

Land use, siting, and neighborhood impacts

4

Economic impacts

Built on what the City can actually do.

RECOMMENDATIONS · ELECTRICITY AND WATER

Pillars 1 and 2: grid and water.

Recommendation	Status
P1·1 Require a standardized technical fact sheet from large-load applicants for City incentives.	New for the City
P1·2 Attach verifiable grid-related commitments to City incentives.	Builds on a City proposal
P2·1 Require non-evaporative, closed-loop technology. Supplemental adiabatic cooling is permissible, supplied from on-site stored water and without additional water-service capacity.	Builds on a City proposal
P2·2 Require a facility-level water-impact statement with requests for City water service or incentives.	Continues City practice
P2·3 Protect municipal water reliability through utility review and conditions of service.	Continues City practice
P2·4 Evaluate reclaimed water case by case.	Continues City practice
P2·5 Require end-use submetering and facility-level reporting, with public release of aggregated and non-confidential data, where permitted by law.	New for the City

RECOMMENDATIONS · LAND USE AND NEIGHBORS

Pillar 3: siting and neighbors.

Recommendation	Status
P3·1 Establish data-center zoning supplemental standards, including a 350-foot Neighbor Protection Distance, increased for taller buildings, between data centers and sensitive receptors.	Builds on a City proposal
P3·2 Establish an acoustic assessment, performance, verification, and enforcement framework.	Builds on a City proposal
P3·3 Keep the zero-foot-candle standard for lighting and add plan review and a measurable threshold for field verification.	Continues City practice
P3·4 Complete a low-frequency noise pilot study of existing data centers, and pursue a broader monitoring program as resources allow.	New for the City
P3·5 Support the City's June 2 proposed standards for protecting nearby residential areas.	Builds on a City proposal
P3·6 Make backup-generator information easy to find and ask that the 2050 Comprehensive Plan address air-quality effects of clustered electricity generation.	New for the City
P3·7 Ask that the 2050 Comprehensive Plan consider the thermal impacts of large data centers.	New for the City
P3·8 Prepare a community context profile for each proposed data center, and ask that the 2050 Comprehensive Plan address the cumulative burden.	New for the City

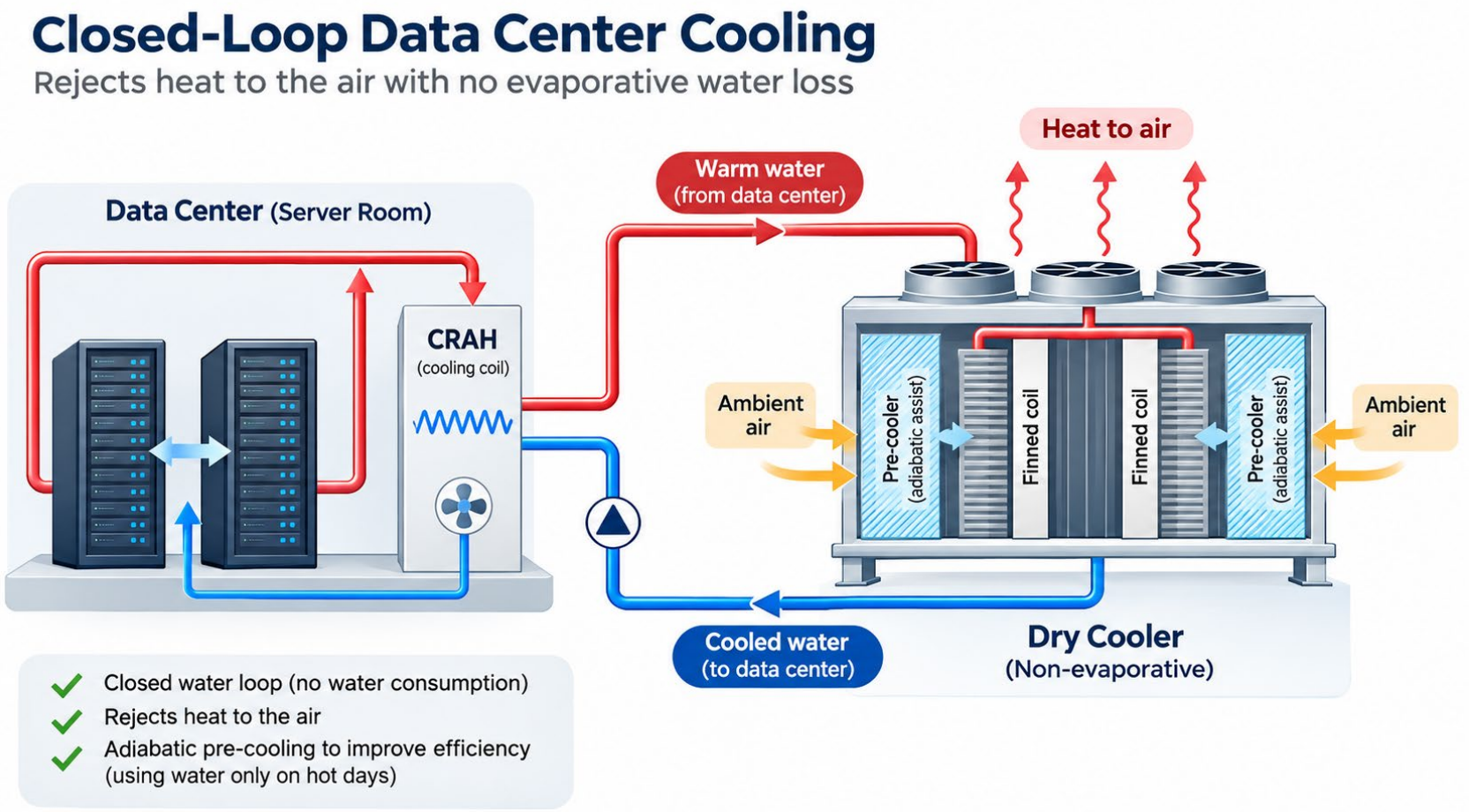
RECOMMENDATIONS · ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Pillar 4: economic impacts.

Recommendation	Status
P4·1 Continue the City's existing project-information requirements and add a standardized set of data-center-specific information.	Continues City practice
P4·2 Continue basing incentive evaluations on direct, verifiable measures and clearly distinguish modeled economic effects.	Continues City practice
P4·3 Continue rigorous fiscal review of incentives and strengthen the transparency of the net-fiscal and "But-For" analysis.	Continues City practice
P4·4 Continue enforceable performance protections and consider long-run project risk in incentive and infrastructure agreements.	Continues City practice

RECOMMENDATIONS · PILLAR 2

A zero-water solution (non-evaporative, closed-loop technology with supplemental adiabatic cooling).

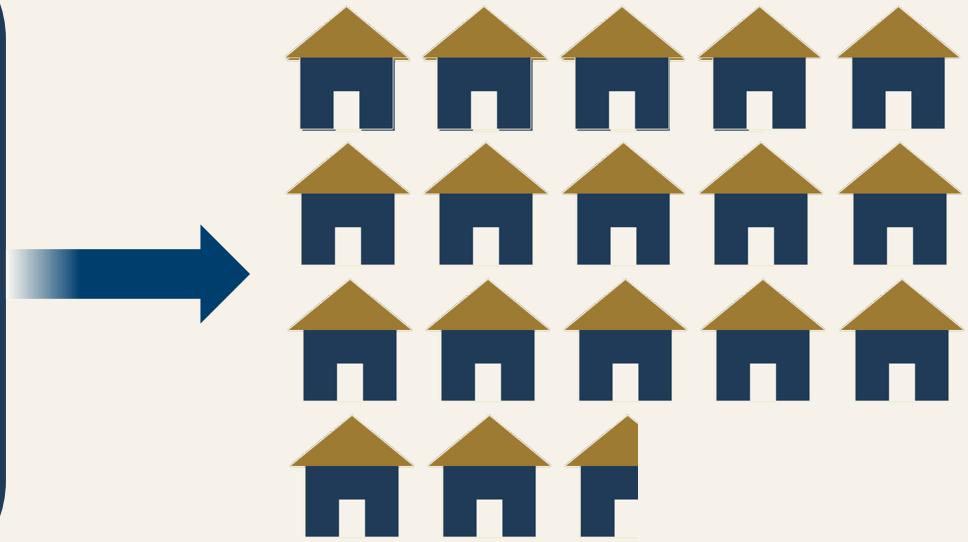


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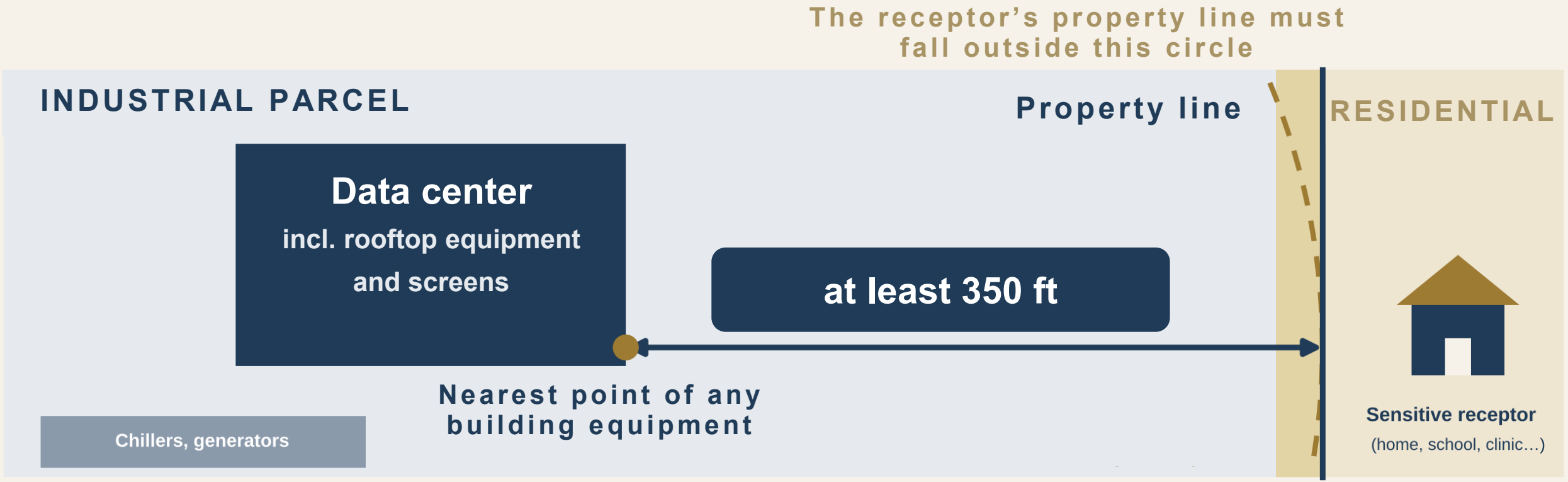
50 MW data center

- **Initial fill: 150,000 – 300,000 gallons** (average single family household uses ~85,000 gallons per year)
- **Flush/final rinse/fill: 3x – 5x initial fill (450,000 – 1.5M gallons)**



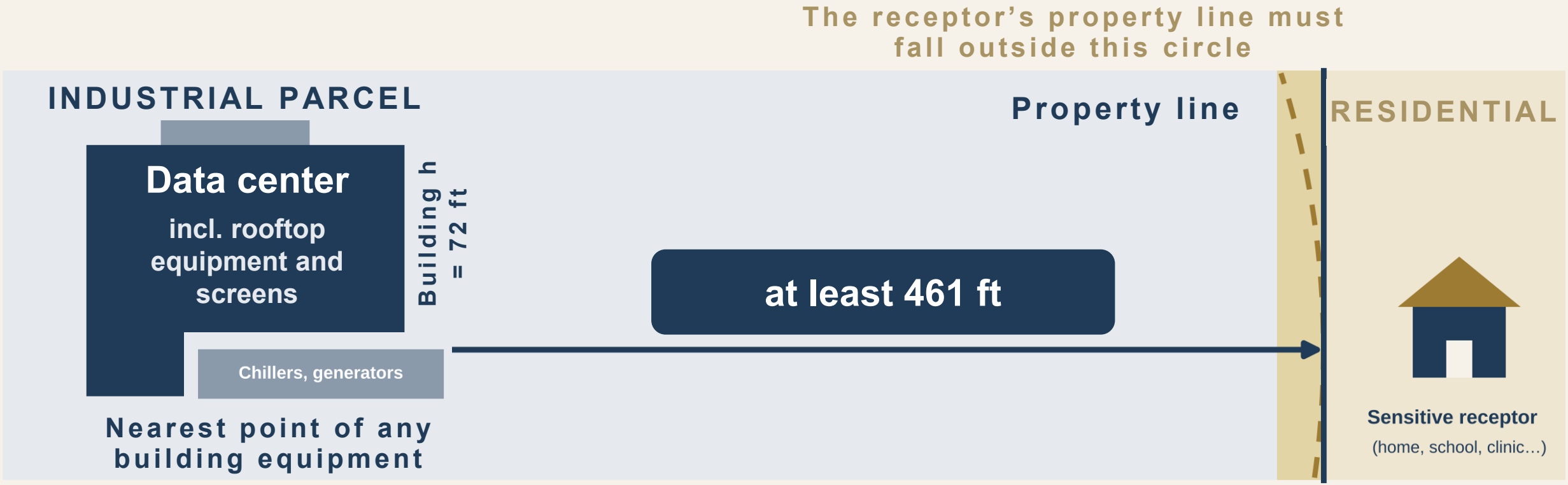
RECOMMENDATIONS · PILLAR 3

Protect residential neighbors with zoning supplemental standards that can be measured.



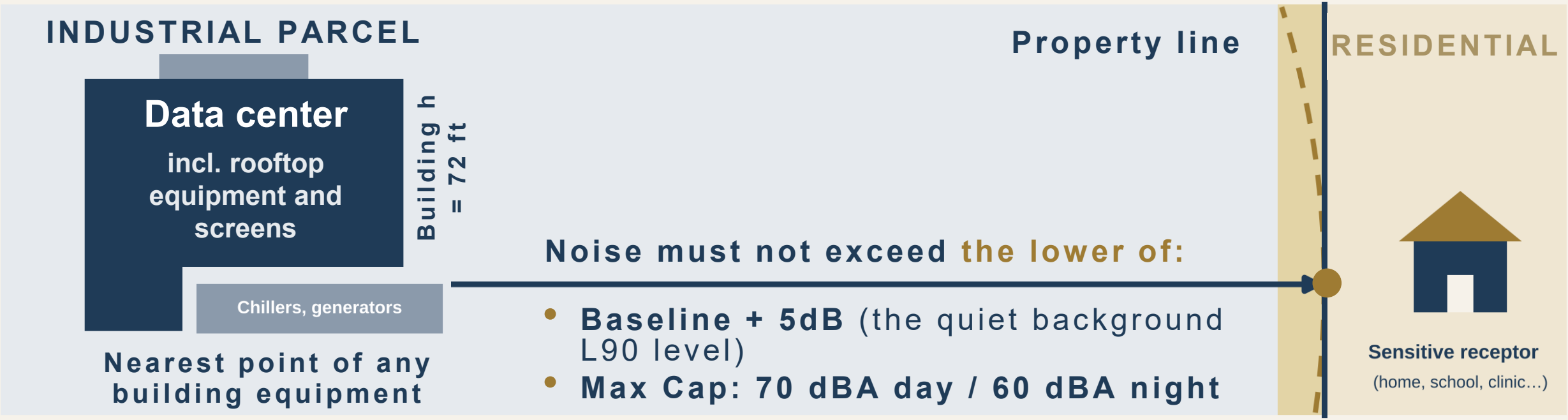
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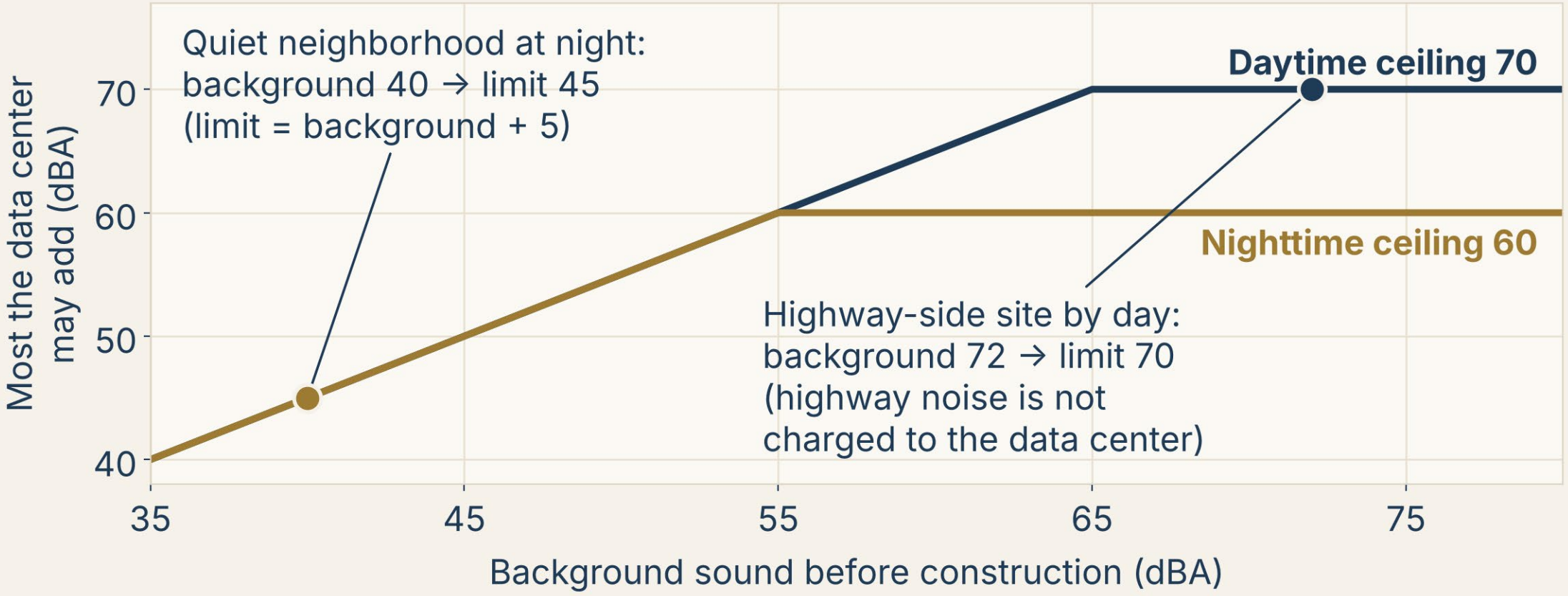
Protect residential neighbors with noise level standards that can be measured.



RECOMMENDATIONS · PILLAR 3

The noise limit adapts to the setting.

It limits the data center’s own sound, not highway or other noise.



RECOMMENDATIONS · PILLAR 3

We heard concerns about hum. So we're going to measure it.

Real low-frequency noise levels at homes near existing data centers were poorly documented — so instead of guessing, we recommended measuring them.

WHAT WE RECOMMEND — P3·4

Low-Frequency Noise Pilot Study

Measure actual low-frequency sound at homes near existing data centers, then pursue a broader monitoring program as resources allow.

NEW FOR THE CITY

This is the MEASURE step in our PREDICT → COMMIT → MEASURE framework.


FORT WORTH
where the west begins


FORT WORTH
where the best are built

WITH GRATITUDE

Thank you

The City staff

The subject-matter experts

The commissioners

Questions and discussion