

WHAT DOES RESPONSIBLE DATA CENTER DEVELOPMENT LOOK LIKE

Understanding how data center development and technology has evolved

TECHNOLOGY IS EVOLVING

Thanks to the ingenuity of American engineers, Data Center technology is evolving rapidly to ensure they are efficient and have a low impact on resources. Most modern projects implement new technologies and design plans that reduce water use, noise production, and power needs'

HEAT RECOVERY

Server heat used to vent into the sky. New systems pipe it into district heating grids and boost it with heat pumps, delivering it to residents free of charge. Odense, Denmark's plant supplies 165,000 MWh a year to 11,000 homes and businesses at 45 MW capacity — the largest heat-pump station of its kind in Denmark. Germany now mandates waste-heat reuse for new data centers, requiring 20% by 2028.

CLOSED-LOOP WATER COOLING

Cooling used to mean evaporating water. Microsoft's newest campus in Mt. Pleasant, Wisconsin uses a sealed liquid loop filled once at construction that recirculates indefinitely — no evaporation, no draw on local supply. It saves roughly 33 million gallons per facility per year and uses about the same water annually as a single restaurant. Every new Microsoft data center now uses this design by default, and 90% of Microsoft's fleet already runs on low- or zero-water systems.

CASE STUDIES

WHAT GOOD COMMUNITY BENEFIT DEALS CAN LOOK LIKE



LANCASTER, PENNSYLVANIA

In late 2025, Lancaster signed the first data-center-specific Community Benefits Agreement in the U.S. 20,000-gallon-per-day water cap, 100% clean energy, closed-loop cooling, 100ft buffers, a public complaint portal, and \$20 million for city and clean-energy funds. Brookings and FAS already cite it as a template.



CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA

Cedar Rapids ties QTS and Google payments to each completed phase, \$300,000 per year from QTS (up to \$18 million) and \$400,000 per year from Google (up to \$36 million), with the City Council controlling how the fund is spent.

CLOSE TO HOME: HOBART'S \$15 BILLION DEAL

In January 2026, Hobart's City Council approved a data center campus at a dedicated technology park. City leaders studied Virginia and Ohio first, then negotiated terms around what residents raised. The developer covers all infrastructure — water, sanitary, and the full cost of new power generation.

\$47M upfront community enhancement payment — among the largest ever in the United States.

\$55M more at permitting and construction, part of \$175 million and more in total city revenue.

2.4 GW of new power capacity fully funded by Amazon, with payments that lower existing customers' bills.