

Informational Session Chapter 23 – Zoning Inclusion of Data Centers (ORD2026-01)

An overview of Chapter 23 – Data Center regulations,
presented by Department of Planning Services staff

Define and Clarify

Right now, Weld County Code **does not** address data centers specifically.

The code change will:

- 1. Define what is considered a data center**
- 2. Clarify where data centers are allowed within unincorporated Weld County**
- 3. Address noise level standards**

Define

Definition of Data Center:

DATA CENTER: A BUILDING or BUILDINGS used to house information technology or telecommunications equipment with which digital information is processed, transferred, and/or stored. A DATA CENTER may include associated ancillary STRUCTURES, including, but not limited to, OFFICES, security BUILDINGS, cooling water tanks, and backup power systems with a total capacity of less than fifty (50) megawatts.

Clarify

Specify where allowed:

- All Industrial zones (I-zone): Site Plan Review.
 - **Site Plan Review (SPR):** Involves **site-specific review** and may include conditions or requirements based on the proposal's location and type but **does not** include a public hearing component.
- Agricultural zones outside of subdivisions and historic townsites (Ag-zone): Use by Special Review.
 - **Use by Special Review (USR):** Involves **site-specific review**, may include conditions or requirements based on the proposal's location and type, and **includes** a public hearing component.

Weld County Zoning – A very brief overview

- Weld County only has zoning jurisdiction outside incorporated cities and towns.
- All unincorporated land is zoned one of the following:
 - Agricultural (A)
 - Residential (R-1 through R-5)
 - Estate (E)
 - Commercial (C-1 through C-3)
 - Industrial (I-1 through I-3)
 - Planned Unit Development (PUD)

Weld County Zoning

- For the purpose of zoning, uses fall into the following categories:
 - Uses by Right & Accessory Uses
 - Example: House and a shed in A, R, and E zones.
 - Uses allowed by Site Plan Review (SPR)
 - Uses by Zoning Permit
 - Examples in A zone: Breweries, landscaping companies, veterinarians.
 - Uses by Special Review (USR)
- Separate from Zoning are what are called 1041s:
 - Major Facilities of a Public Utility (large powerplants and transmission lines)
 - Oil and Gas Wells

Site Plan Review (SPR)

- Uses that have been determined appropriate for their zone but require review by Planning staff to ensure they meet certain code requirements.
 - Requirements include:
 - Adequate water supply
 - Adequate stormwater drainage
 - Adequate parking
 - Noise limits
 - Air and water quality requirements: Must comply with State regulations.

Noise

- **Change reference to C.R.S. to Chapter 14, Health and Animals, Article IX, Noise, of Weld County Code.**
 - Only addresses db(A). (Same definition as C.R.S.)
 - **Add a db(C) limit of 65 decibels at any point within 25 feet of property line.**

Land Use	7 a.m. to 9 p.m. (db(A))	7 p.m. to 9 a.m. (db(A))
Residential or Commercial Areas & Non-specified Areas	55	50
Industrial Areas & Construction Activities	80	75

Noise

- **USRs: Sec. 23-2-250. - Operation standards.**
 - Subsection A:
 - The operation of the USES shall comply with the noise standards enumerated in Section 25-12-101, et seq., C.R.S.
- **SPRs: Sec. 23-2-160. - Application requirements for site plan review.**
 - Section 1: Noise. USES shall be located, designed and operated in accordance with the noise standards as established in Section 25-12-101, et seq., C.R.S.

Noise

USES shall be located, designed, and operated in accordance with the noise standards as established in Chapter 14, Article IX, of this code. In addition to the dB(A) noise limits in Section 14-9-40 of this code, no USE shall be allowed to exceed a C-scale noise limit of 65 dB(C) as measured at any point within twenty-five (25) feet of the subject property boundary.

A noise mitigation plan indicating anticipated noise levels and proposed mitigation may be required.

Decibels (dB)	Example
140 (Threshold of Pain)	Fireworks
130	Jet Engine
120	Siren
110	Trombone
100	Helicopter
90	Hair Dryer
80 (Very loud)	Truck
70 (Loud)	Car
60 (Moderate to Quiet)	Conversation
50 (Faint)	Refrigerator
40	Rain
30	Rustle of Leaves
20	Whisper
10	Breath

Important facts

- Weld County does NOT provide utilities
- Weld County does NOT provide water

Applicants are responsible for **coordinating directly** with the **appropriate utility providers** to verify required service capacities.

What's next?

Third reading for Ord26-01 to be heard on April 6, 2026.

Location: 1150 O Street, Greeley, CO 80631

Time: 9:00 am

Ordinance 2026-01 - Data Centers



Connect with Us!

General questions on code:

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Comments for Ord26-01:

AskTheCommissioners@weld.gov

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Noise, decibels, dB(A) vs. dB(C)

- **dB (Decibel):**
 - One-tenth of a **bel**, a measure of loudness or sound pressure named for Alexander Graham Bell, which is why the B is usually capitalized.
 - A weighted scale for judging loudness that corresponds to the hearing threshold of the human ear.
 - Not a straight line. A 50 dB(A) noise is about 316 times louder than a 25 dB(A) noise.
- **dB(A):** Primarily focuses on mid-range frequencies, making it suitable for general noise assessments.
- **dB(C):** Provides a flatter response across the frequency spectrum, capturing low-frequency and peak sounds, which is useful for measuring impulse noises.

Section 25-12-101, et seq., C.R.S.

- **Maximum permissible noise levels.**

- Only addresses db(A).
 - “db(A)” means sound levels in decibels measured on the “A” scale of a standard sound level meter having characteristics defined by the American national standards institute, publication S1. 4 – 1971
 - Several exemptions such as railroads, electrical transmission lines, etc.

Zone	7 a.m. to 7 p.m. (db(A))	7 p.m. to 7 a.m. (db(A))
Residential	55	50
Commercial	60	55
Light Industrial	70	65
Industrial	80	75