



## SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2024.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Hanover County

Program Title: Cooperative Planning for First Data Center Campus in Hanover County

Program Category: Community & Economic Development

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Brandon S. Turner

Title: Director

Department: Economic Development

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Website: HanoverVirginia.com

Email: bsturner@hanovervirginia.com

### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: John Budesky

Title: County Administrator

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



**Hanover County, Virginia**

**Department of Economic Development**

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**Criteria for Selection:**

- *Promote intergovernmental cooperation and/or cooperation with local, state and federal entities and/or private enterprises in addressing a problem or situation.*
- *Provide a model that other local governments may learn from or implement in their own localities.*

**Challenge**

In September 2023, an application was filed with Hanover County’s Department of Planning indicating an applicant wished to pursue a data center-oriented technology park on several properties totaling 1,200+ acres adjacent to I-95 north of the Town of Ashland. Data centers house the digital infrastructure necessary to facilitate cloud computing and make technologies like 5G and artificial intelligence (AI) possible. The need for these facilities has

soared during the past few years, fueled by remote work and the growth of high-speed streaming demands among other enhanced technology uses. The Richmond Region, and particularly Hanover County, has seen strong demand from the industry as it spreads south from the Northern Virginia region. Presently, Pixel Factory is the only data center in operation in Hanover County, and at less than 10,000 s.f. is a small player in the global market. To address the application and magnitude of the project, the County needed to mobilize to provide public meetings, coordinate County and private sector resources, work with the applicant and citizens to address all concerns and prepare materials

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Notice is hereby given that a Community Meeting has been scheduled for Monday, September 18, 2023, at 6:00pm at the Coach House at Hanover Tavern, 13181 Hanover Courthouse Road, Hanover, VA 23069. The applicant will provide an overview of their zoning requests.

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the zoning requests as noted below:

**REZ2023-00035, BLENHEIM ASSOCIATES LP ET AL.**  
Request to rezone from A-1, Agricultural District, to M-1(c), Limited Industrial District with conditions, on GPINs 7881-90-1327, 7890-29-5185, 7891-01-7827, and 7881-62-7381, consisting of approximately 1190.09 acres, and located on the south line of Hickory Hill Road (State Route 646) at its intersection with Old Ridge Road (State Route 738). The subject property is designated on the General Land Use Plan Map as Planned Business. The proposed zoning amendment would allow for development of a data center technology park. (PUBLIC HEARING) **Magisterial District: Beavertdam**

**CUP2023-00014, BLENHEIM ASSOCIATES, L.P. ET AL.**  
Request a Conditional Use Permit in accordance with Sections 26-165.1, 26-20.12, and 26-20.37 of the Hanover County Zoning Ordinance to permit a public wastewater lift (pumping) station, substation, and Tier 2 battery energy storage system on GPINs 7881-90-1327, 7890-29-5185, 7891-01-7827, and 7881-62-7381, consisting of approximately 1190.09 acres, zoned A-1, Agricultural District (pending rezoning request for M-1(c), Limited Industrial District with conditions), and located on the south line of Hickory Hill Road (State Route 646) at its intersection with Old Ridge Road (State Route 738). The subject property is designated on the General Land Use Plan Map as Planned Business. (PUBLIC HEARING) **Magisterial District: Beavertdam**

**SE2023-00023, BLENHEIM ASSOCIATES, L.P. ET AL.**  
Request a Special Exception in accordance with Section 26-336 of the Hanover County Zoning Ordinance to allow buildings taller than permitted on GPINs 7881-90-1327, 7890-29-5185, 7891-01-7827, and 7881-62-7381, consisting of approximately 1190.09 acres, zoned A-1, Agricultural District (pending rezoning request for M-1(c), Limited Industrial District with conditions), and located on the south line of Hickory Hill Road (State Route 646) at its intersection with Old Ridge Road (State Route 738). (PUBLIC HEARING) **Magisterial District: Beavertdam**

*NOTICE: Members of the Hanover County Board of Supervisors and/or the Hanover County Planning Commission may attend this meeting. In the event more than two members of the same Board or Commission are in attendance and respond to questions or enter into discussion about County business, this meeting will be considered a public meeting under the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. This meeting information serves as public notice of the meeting.*



for presentations to the Hanover Planning Commission and Hanover Board of Supervisors. The County's desire was always to work with the applicant and make this project a world-class data center campus which would set the standard for future types of development in Hanover and other communities.

## **Program Description**

The Tract Technology Campus, to be developed on five parcels totaling 1,200+ acres, required rezoning from A-1 (Agriculture) to M-1 (Limited Industrial District). This rezoning included several public processes



including multiple community meetings near the project site, a Planning Commission public hearing, and a Board of Supervisors public hearing. These parcels proposed for the data center park are designated on the Land Use Plan as an Employment Center in the County's Comprehensive Plan, and are areas intended to accommodate employment-generating business and limited industrial uses within cohesive, master-planned developments that are at least 20 acres in size. This area has been identified for nearly 20 years in comprehensive plans as an area of future economic development. This development calls for upwards of eight data center campuses on the site, with approximately 30 buildings and more than 700 employees.



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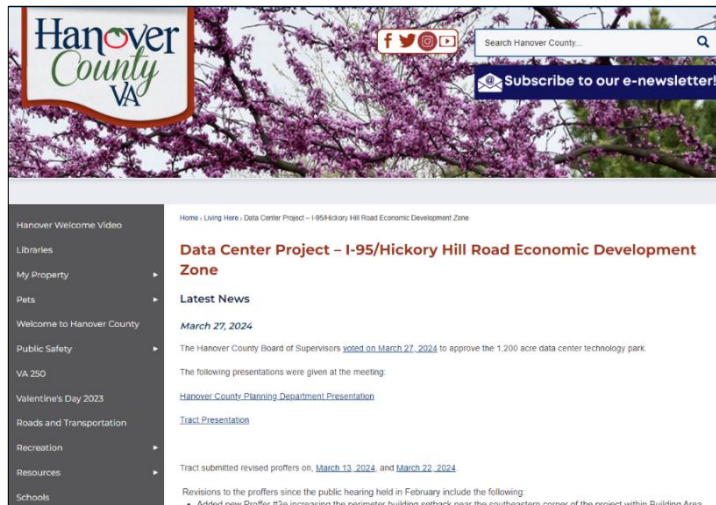
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Tract anticipates it will spend \$75 million to \$100 million on infrastructure throughout the property, including water and sewer utilities, roads and other projects to make the property site ready. While the zoning application’s conceptual plan doesn’t outline a specific vision for the overall project, Tract representatives have indicated they expect that 10% to 12% of the project area’s acreage will be occupied by data center buildings and associated facilities. The overall project will have about 450 acres, or 37% of the site, used as buffer and open space with building setbacks for the property would range from 150 feet to 250 feet. These setbacks were negotiated as part of the rezoning process and are significant enhancements to what present zoning requires. In addition, Tract worked with the County to limit building heights on certain properties neighboring residential use, with taller buildings to be located towards the center of the development and additional setbacks should buildings go above a certain height in parts of the park. Tract and Dominion also worked with Hanover County on the placement of substation and electrical infrastructure in the park to the interior of the campus. All of these features are incorporated to significantly reduce visual impact to neighboring residences.

**Execution**

The Planning Department collaborated with the County’s Communications and Community Engagement, Economic Development, Department of Public Utilities and other departments to create a webpage including project details, frequently asked questions, parcel maps, public meetings,





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history of land use designation in this area, and Hanover's role in data center attraction including professional studies and competitive tax rates. This webpage was, and continues to be, updated frequently as new information is made available and/or when changes in the project warrant communication with the community. Created once the project submitted the initial rezoning application to the County, it was imperative for County leadership to keep this process as open and engaged as possible to allow citizens to receive first-hand information and education on the industry sector, development, and process.

Dominion Energy provided substantial input on the project and was involved from the very beginning. The company submitted a letter to the Hanover County Planning Commission in January 2024 committing its ability to meet the project's electricity needs. The Virginia Department of Transportation has also been involved in the project through the County's Public Works Department and will be more engaged with the project in the future as required traffic studies are to be conducted and road upgrades implemented. Developers worked closely with the County throughout the process regarding upgrades in infrastructure to the site. This project will require millions of dollars in expansion of water and sewer to the property as well as a pump station on site. Thanks to previous long-range capital improvement plans, Hanover County had identified these improvements years ago and Public Utilities was able to quickly work with the developer on plans to expand these utilities to the site.





## Results

After conducting multiple public meetings and presenting at several Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors meetings, the applicant responded to County and citizen concerns by providing numerous

The screenshot shows a presentation slide with the following content:

- Improvements to the Application** (tract logo)
- NATURAL BUFFERS**
  - Proffer 4**
    - Increased natural buffers from 40' to 150' for the majority of the property.
    - Added 75 acres of natural buffer. Overall increase from 56 ac (5%) to 165.5 acres (14%).
    - Increased open space to 457 acres (37%).
- BUILDING SETBACKS**
  - Proffer 3**
    - Increased building setbacks from 140' – 150' to 200' for the majority of the property.
    - Increased the building setback to 250' at the southeast corner of Building Area 8.

Footer: Hanover County Public Hearing 22

revisions to the master development, including proffers increasing building setbacks and building height limitations, increased natural buffers, and additional sound attenuation measures on mechanical equipment. On March 27, 2024, the Hanover County Board of Supervisors unanimously voted to approve the 1,200 acre data center technology park. This vote followed the Hanover Planning Commission’s unanimous January recommendation to approve the project.

County officials worked closely with the developers and residents to address concerns about the technology park’s potential impacts to the surrounding rural area. Residents offered extensive feedback which resulted in an improved project that will, despite the size of the project, significantly mitigate visual and ecological impact on the community. Tract agreed to conduct noise studies during the site approval stage for each data center as well as post-construction. The company also will create resource protection areas and provide a \$3.5 million cash contribution to the County to make improvements to Hickory Hill Road, the main access point to this park, addressing one of the more significant concerns of traffic access in the area. An additional \$100,000 will be provided by Tract to the County for improvements and enhanced amenities to nearby Washington Lacy Park, which



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currently offers trails for horseback riding and hiking. Development of this project will also eliminate the need for a major north/south connector road through the park which was previously planned when higher density uses were proposed; elimination of the road will keep Washington Lacy Park intact and allow for enhancement of vital greenspace in the community.

This project included significant input and collaboration from Tract, the Hanover Planning Commission and Department of Planning, Hanover's Public Works and Public Utilities departments, Hanover County Economic Development Authority and Department of Economic Development, Hanover Department of Finance and Commissioner of the Revenue, the Board of Supervisors and especially citizens of the community. The level of engagement between the parties listed above resulted in the creation of a world class data center park that will allow for substantial economic development and tax generation while working to significantly mitigating impact of development on residents and the environment.

**The project is expected to result in up to eight data center campuses developed over the next 20 years, representing \$10-\$15 billion in capital investment, creation of 700+ high wage jobs, and generate an estimated \$1.78 billion in tax revenue for the County over the next two decades.**

**Relevant links:**

[Data Center Project – I-95/Hickory Hill Road Economic Development Zone](#)



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## **Executive Summary**

In September 2023, an application was filed with Hanover County's Department of Planning indicating an applicant wished to pursue a data center-oriented technology park on several properties totaling 1,200+ acres adjacent to I-95 north of the Town of Ashland. To address the application and magnitude of the project, the County needed to mobilize numerous departments and resources. The County's desire was always to work with the applicant to make this a world-class data center campus which would set the standard for future types of development in Hanover and other communities.

Various Hanover County departments, the applicant and other regional partners collaborated to create a webpage to address all processes, questions, and project details. Created immediately following the project submission and the initial rezoning application to the County, it was imperative for County leadership to keep this process as open and engaged as possible to allow citizens to receive first-hand information and education on the industry sector, development, and process as well as voice their concerns and questions. This webpage was, and continues to be, updated frequently as new information is made available and/or when changes in the project warranted communication with the community.

After conducting multiple public meetings and presenting at several Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors meetings, the applicant responded to County and citizen concerns by providing numerous revisions to the master development, including proffers increasing building setbacks and building height limitations, increased natural buffers, and additional sound attenuation measures on mechanical equipment. On March 27, 2024, the Hanover County Board of Supervisors unanimously voted to approve the rezoning for the 1,200-acre data center technology park. This vote followed the Hanover Planning Commission's unanimous January recommendation to approve the project. County officials worked closely with the developers and residents to address concerns about the technology park's potential impacts to the surrounding rural area.

**The project is expected to result in up to eight data center campuses developed over the next 20 years, representing \$10-\$15 billion in capital investment, creation of 700+ high wage jobs, and generate an estimated \$1.78 billion in tax revenue for the County over the next two decades.**