

Saline Township Data Center Project Information and Frequently Asked Questions

This document includes answers to frequently asked questions about the data center project in Saline Township. The project is ongoing, and so this document will be updated as new information becomes available. Please note that this document does not address every aspect of the project.

Please visit the Data Center Updates page of the Saline Township website for more information about the data center project and updates to this document:

<https://salinetownship.org/data-center-update>

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General

Project Background

The data center project is a private development initiated by [Related Digital](#), also referred to as Related or RD. Related is developing the project as part of [Oracle](#) and [OpenAI](#)'s initiative to build data center infrastructure across the country. OpenAI calls this effort the [Stargate](#) project.

The data center site consists of 8 properties located on the north side of Michigan Avenue in Saline Township, adjacent to the Township's western border with Bridgewater Township. The site is approximately 575 acres in total area.

On July 10, 2025, Related Digital submitted an application to rezone the site from the A-1 District to the I-1 (Industrial/Research) District, in order to develop, construct, use and operate the data center. The review process took place over multiple meetings. After a public hearing before the Planning Commission, the Township Board voted to deny the rezoning request.

On September 12, 2025, the developers and property owners filed a lawsuit challenging the denial. The Township Board and Planning Commission held a joint public information meeting on September 24, 2025, in order to describe the lawsuit, provide further information regarding the proposed Data Center and answer questions from the public and receive further public comment regarding the Data Center. Thereafter the parties agreed to engage in good faith settlement negotiations.

The Township, developers, and property owners agreed to settle the dispute according to terms outlined in a Consent Judgement, which was reviewed and approved for entry by the Washtenaw County Circuit Court.

Governing Agreements and Regulations

The data center must be developed according to the agreed-upon terms of the Consent Judgement. To the extent the Consent Judgment is silent on issues regulated by Township Codes, then the Township Codes shall control to the extent they do not prevent or preclude or reduce the size or scope of the project authorized by the Consent Judgement.

The data center's construction and operation is also subject to permitting and operational requirements administered by the following Washtenaw County and State of Michigan agencies:

- Washtenaw County Building Department

- Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner's Office
- Washtenaw County Health Department
- Michigan Department of Transportation
- Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE)

Construction Management

Related Digital has hired [Walbridge](#), a Detroit-based construction management company, to oversee the data center's construction. In addition to Walbridge, a variety of subcontractors from various construction trades will be involved with building the facility.

Data Center Construction

Concrete Batch Plant

The developers are planning to use an on-site concrete plant to mix concrete for the data center building foundations. Providing water for an on-site cement facility was not specifically mentioned in the Consent Judgement. However, “the Township shall be deemed to have given its approval for the Plaintiffs’ use, development, and construction” of the data center under Section 2. On-site batch plants are conventional for projects of this scale. The on-site cement facility also avoids cement truck use and additional disturbance on US-12.

The Township will be reviewing the batch plant’s anticipated water use before it begins operation and monitoring it during operation. The batch plant will use water from temporary wells. The developers have agreed to install flow metering devices on all temporary wells that they use during construction. The Township has also asked the developers and the contractor building the batch plant to provide its maximum day expected water use to compare with the expected use from the site’s main production well. The main production well will not go into use until later in the project. An expected water use matrix table will be provided to the Twp Data Center Information Website. Once concrete work on the site is complete, the batch plant will be removed from the property and its wells be capped and properly abandoned and certified.

Water and Wastewater

Anticipated water use

The developers anticipate that the facility will use roughly 20,000 gallons a day. The Township and other agencies will be reviewing the anticipated water consumption as the project's construction plans and equipment inventories are finalized.

Cooling equipment and water use

Data centers rely on cooling infrastructure to prevent computing equipment from overheating. A variety of cooling systems and equipment are used in the industry, and each functions differently.¹ Cooling equipment that relies on evaporation can consume significant amounts of water. Other equipment, such as air-cooled chillers, do not use any water. However, air-based systems tend to consume more electricity.

Under Section (3)(g) of the Consent Judgement, the data center will “not use a design that contains high-water-use evaporative cooling.” To comply, the facility will need to use equipment that relies on a different cooling process. The Township will be reviewing the facility's equipment specifications to ensure that is the case.

The facility will use air-cooled equipment that circulates a water/refrigerant mix. The system will be initially filled using water from the facility's main production well, but will not involve evaporative cooling processes. In addition, utility testing needs (such as pressure testing and bacteriological testing) of utility lines and flushing will be allowed from the production well source.

The Township will have a better understanding of the anticipated water use when the review process is complete, and will post that number on the website when it is available.

Other water uses

Under Section (3)(g) of the Consent Judgement, water use at the data center will be limited to “restrooms/domestic uses, humidity, landscaping, fire protection and general maintenance.” The domestic use will be primarily a kitchen/lunch area where water is needed for workers in addition to the normal restroom usage. There will also be small laboratory (sinks, emergency eye wash, cleaning) areas for the wastewater and water

¹ Shehabi, A., Smith, S.J., Hubbard, A., Newkirk, A., Lei, N., Siddik, M.A.B., Holecek, B., Koomey, J., Masanet, E., Sartor, D. 2024. 2024 United States Data Center Energy Usage Report. Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, Berkeley, California. LBNL-2001637.

<https://escholarship.org/content/qt32d6m0d1/qt32d6m0d1.pdf>

treatment needs to satisfy EGLE monthly reporting and testing where water will be used. General maintenance will be for janitorial use such as mop sinks and cleaning water. Water use for humidity refers to equipment that will regulate humidity in the computer equipment areas, worker areas, and treatment facilities.

The developers will need to provide the Township with documentation to demonstrate their anticipated water use, including water used for domestic, humidity control, and general maintenance purposes. All of the water, wastewater, and mechanical systems and equipment are subject to review by the Township, County, or EGLE.

Wastewater discharge and disposal

Permitting by EGLE and the County does not allow for discharge of the cooling system onto the site or waterways of the state. The owners are proposing to haul the cooling discharge off site, which will be monitored through EGLE.

Lighting, Noise, and Emissions

Lighting

The facility will have to comply with Article 10 of the Township's Zoning Ordinance, which regulates outdoor lighting. The Township will review the facility's lighting plan before outdoor lights are installed. The lighting plan must identify the location of all outdoor fixtures, their specifications, manner of shielding, and mounting height. The plan also has to include a photometric grid that measures the overall light intensity within the site. Among other requirements, all outdoor lights must be fully shielded to prevent glare. Illumination levels cannot exceed 10 footcandles at any point within the site or 1 footcandle at any lot line.

Noise

Noise levels are limited according to Section (3)(t) of the Consent Judgement as follows:

"The sound emitted from the operation of the Data Center shall at all times not exceed 55db at all property lines. In addition, generators will only be used in the operation of the Data Center for emergency situations and for testing, per manufacturer's recommendations, during daylight hours only and not more than once per week. In all such instances the noise level at all property lines shall not exceed 55db."

The developers have provided a sound study that models the noise that the facility's outdoor equipment will generate. The study must demonstrate that the noise levels comply with the judgement. The Township can monitor the facility's noise levels after construction and require or take additional measurements to confirm compliance if necessary.

Emissions

According to the developers, the only sources of emissions will be 14 diesel-fired emergency generators and 1 diesel fired fire water pump. They will only run in emergency situations and for routine maintenance.

Emissions are regulated by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) Air Quality Division (AQD). The AQD enforces compliance with federal air quality regulations promulgated under the federal Clean Air Act. The AQD is also responsible for enforcing compliance with state air quality rules and uses activities such as permitting, air quality evaluation, compliance and enforcement, and evaluating air toxics to do so.

The AQD has issued a permit for the developers to install the generators and pump (PTI0000135 v1.0.), which is based upon and subject to compliance with all air quality

administrative rules and permit conditions. A copy of the permit and application documents are available on EGLE's [MiEnviro Portal](#).

Is the data center getting public money or benefits?

Agreements

The only benefits that Saline Township has agreed to provide to the data center owners are outlined in the Consent Judgement.

Under Section (8)(a) of the Consent Judgement, the Township has agreed to accept ownership of the data center's water system if it is requested by the developer and required by the State of Michigan for the data center to qualify for the Sales and Use Tax exemption. If the Township takes ownership of the system, the data center owners have agreed to operate, maintain, repair and/or replace the water system in accordance with applicable law at no expense to the Township.

The reason for this agreement is that the sales and use tax exemption legislation requires data centers receiving the exemptions to "use municipal water sourced from a municipal water system that has available capacity to serve the facility." [MCL 205.54ee](#). It is not clear yet if this requirement will apply to the Related project.

Local tax benefits

The Township has agreed to grant an industrial property tax abatement, which is described in Section 14 of the Judgement. This is the only property tax benefit that the Township has approved for the data center. In general, industrial property tax abatements can amount to a 50% reduction in both real and personal property taxes for the duration of the abatement period. The Township has agreed to approve the abatement for a period of 12 years. To implement the abatement, the Township has approved an industrial development district (IDD) encompassing the property and has agreed to approve the owner's application for an Industrial Facilities Tax Exemption Certificate, which subject to final approval by the State Tax Commission. This abatement program is authorized under PA 198 of 1974, as amended.

The total tax benefits that the data center owners will receive will depend on the State Tax Commission's review of their application, which has not occurred yet. A copy of the owner's abatement application is included as an attachment in the Consent Judgement. The owner has listed the data center's real property costs as \$1,311,000,000.00 and the personal property costs as \$3,500,000,000.00.

The developers provided an estimate the real and personal property tax revenue that the project would generate with and without the industrial facility abatement as part of their initial application. A copy will be posted on the Township's website.

State tax benefits

The data center developer and/or its tenant intend to pursue an Enterprise Data Center Sales & Use Tax Exemption under the terms of the Michigan General Sales Tax Act, [MCL 205.54ee](#). This exemption eliminates Michigan's 6% sales and use tax on eligible data center construction and equipment purchases. This program is administered by the state, and requires a certification from the Michigan Strategic Fund (MSF). More information is available at the following Michigan Economic Development Corporation webpage: [Enterprise Data Center Sales & Use Tax Exemption | Michigan Business](#)

The Enterprise Data Center Sales & Use Tax Exemption will not affect the Township's real and personal property tax revenue from the data center. However, it will reduce the sales and use tax revenue collected by the state. Portions of the state's sales and use tax revenues are earmarked to the School Aid Fund, constitutional revenue sharing, and the state's general fund. Analyses by the state legislature's fiscal agencies are available at the following webpages: [2023-SFA-0237-U.pdf](#) and [Summary as Passed by the Senate \(5/20/2024\)](#).