

**MOTION: C CARROLL**

**September 28, 2023**

**SECOND: R FREED**

**Regular Meeting**

**Res. No. 23-037**

**RE: SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION ON CRITICAL INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS TO SUPPORT DECISION MAKING ON ENERGY-INTENSIVE COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS**

**ACTION: APPROVED**

**WHEREAS**, on November 17, 2020, the Prince William County Board of Supervisors (Board) adopted Climate Mitigation and Resiliency goals:

- Reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emission to 50% below baseline 2005 levels by 2030
- Achieving 100% renewable electricity in Prince William County Government operations by 2030
- Becoming a Climate Ready Region and making significant progress to be a Climate Resilient Region by 2030
- Sourcing 100% of PWC's electricity from renewable sources by 2035
- Achieving 100% carbon neutrality in Prince William County Government operations by 2050.

**WHEREAS**, MWCOG developed a GHG inventory for PWC, covering a base year of 2005, plus 2012, 2015, and 2018 (the most recent year available), indicating that PWC's emissions increased 19% between 2005 to 2018, to achieve PWC's 50% GHG reduction goal, we will need to reduce emissions by 58% compared to 2018 levels. Current levels are probably higher than 2018 levels, requiring even greater proportional cuts; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commercial Energy sector made up 30% of the County's GHG emissions in 2018, and 35% of the County's GHG emissions in 2020; and

**WHEREAS**, we anticipate that it will take aggressive actions to attain the renewable energy and resilience goals; and

**WHEREAS**, Dominion Energy's 2023 Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) projects the data center industry's power use in their territory will quadruple over the next 15 years (from 2767 MW to 11000 MW), reaching up to 40% of Dominion's load; and

**WHEREAS**, a load forecast published in 2023 by grid operator PJM shows that NOVEC projects its data center demand to rise from about 400 MW in 2022 to 4000 MW by 2028 and 8000 MW by 2034; and

**WHEREAS**, the Virginia Clean Economy Act requires that the two major utilities in the state produce 100% renewable energy by 2050, thereby phasing out all existing natural gas and coal generation facilities; and

**WHEREAS**, the PWC Board of County Supervisors passed [CPA2021-00004 PW Digital Gateway Board of County Supervisors Res. No. 22-508 \(pwcva.gov\)](#), which states in part:

The PW Digital Gateway Special Study Area provides an opportunity to encourage development which provides world-class sustainability initiatives which prioritize the environmental, social, and fiscal impact of development.

The Board has endorsed energy goals which are significant. In order to meet those goals, the below policies are necessary mitigation of the proposed land uses. Proposed development will impact production of greenhouse gases and the below policies are to provide mitigation of these impacts and will help the County reach the greenhouse gas emission goals endorsed by the Board.

DGSU POLICY 1: Encourage development with the Study Area to be a steward of world-class innovation and sustainability implementing a variety of sustainability initiatives aimed at environmental protection, reducing carbon emissions and energy conservation.

DGSU 1.1 Data centers are encouraged to utilize a variety of sustainability initiatives such as:

a) ...

c) Onsite renewable energy such as solar power. (...)

DGSU 1.3 Encourage data center buildings to meet energy efficiency design and operation standards, such as the Design PUE (Power Utilization Effectiveness) or Green Globes.

Individual data center buildings and/or the office components are encouraged to pursue LEED-Core and/or Shell or other, similar programs related to building design and construction techniques. Equivalency to these standards is an acceptable alternative to actual certification.

DGSU 1.4 - Data center operators are encouraged to purchase clean energy through Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) or renewable energy certificates (RECs).

DGSU 1.5 - Encourage the use of less carbon intensive or carbon neutral energy generation for backup generation systems.

**WHEREAS**, the PW Digital Gateway is one of the largest economic development projects ever considered in Prince William County, and it is also one of the most energy intensive; and

**WHEREAS**, to the best of the knowledge of the Sustainability Commission, information has not been submitted by the applicants or developed by the Planning Office on the GHG emissions, fossil/renewable energy mix, and climate resilience implications of the PW Digital Gateway, and this information would be vital in determining whether the rezoning would have a material effect on the County's abilities to attain its climate mitigation and climate resiliency goals.

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**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that

- Prior to making a determination on whether to approve the PWDG rezonings, the Sustainability Commission recommends that county staff develop information on the GHG emissions, fossil/renewable energy mix, and climate resilience implications of the PW Digital Gateway, and their effect on the feasibility of attaining the climate mitigation and climate resiliency goals.
- The SC recommends that an up-to-date listing of all data centers operational, approved but not yet operational, and pending approval is prepared by county staff.
- The SC recommends that Planning Staff and Planning Commission consider this listing of data centers, and the impact of data center growth in the County's Commercial Energy GHG emissions.
- The SC recommends that Planning Staff and Planning Commission review how the rapid increase in data center development in the County, and subsequent GHG emissions, coincides with the stated Climate Mitigation and Climate Resilience goals set forth both by the BOCS and the VCEA.
- In light of the above, the SC recommends that Planning Staff, the Planning Commission, and the BOCS consider strengthening the Sustainability Initiatives set forth in the rezoning proffers for the PWDG, to move closer to becoming "world-class sustainability initiatives" that the CPA set forth. The SC recommends that all initiatives set forth in the CPA be considered, especially those dealing with energy, such as "Incorporate other innovative technologies to reduce power consumption" and "Onsite renewable energy such as solar power".

**Votes:**

**Ayes:** Chinaka A Barbour, Warren Beeton, Tiziana Bottino, Dr. Joseph Boutte, Christopher Carroll, J. Randall Freed, Martin Jeter, Elizabeth H Ward

**Nays:** none

**Absent from Vote:** none

**Absent from Meeting:** none

**For Information:**

Office of Sustainability Director

*Salita Gray*

**ATTEST:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Clerk to the Board**