Community Engagement & Advocacy

Engage residents early and transparently

Data centres are facing increasing public opposition. Engage residents early on in the process so the municipality can channel community concerns into enforceable protections and benefits. Public input should be an important informant of requirements and community benefits agreements to ensure residents receive tangible benefits. Ensure developers can demonstrate that they are meeting duty-to-consult requirements with Indigenous communities affected.

Additionally, public education is needed on the different types of data centres, and the varying levels of environmental impact, as not all data centres are created equally but risk getting lumped together.

Case Study: Mississauga Town Hall on Prologis data centre

Following growing public outcry, the City of Mississauga convened a Town Hall on June 25, 2026 drawing a room full of residents from Wards near where the data centre is set to be located. Prologis representatives also attended to share details of the proposal.



Refrain from entering into agreements that shield developers

Avoid non-disclosure agreements sought by corporations pursuing data centre projects, as they are a limitation to meaningful public engagement and transparent discussion of a project's risks and opportunities. Regular and accurate reporting from data centres on their environmental impacts is critical for both environmental management and community trust.

Local governments should refrain from entering into agreements that shield developers from disclosing estimated water and energy use or potential health impacts. Once data centres are operational, they should submit annual, publicly available impact reports that are audited by third parties.

Coordinate collaboration between Indigenous, Inter-Municipal, and Regional Governments

Data Center developers commonly pursue parallel sitting discussions across municipalities within the same region, comparing sites, approval times and requirements. Without coordination, this dynamic can trigger a race to the bottom to secure investment. When minimum expectations are standardized and predictable across a region, the benefits a community can negotiate for hosting a data centre are strengthened for all.

Another reason it is imperative to coordinate with neighbouring municipalities, Indigenous communities, and regional governments is that data centre impacts extend beyond municipal boundaries, particularly for electricity, water, and air quality.

Regional impacts can strengthen the case for shared standards and positions. Regional partners, such as a watershed association or an air quality district, can play a key role in monitoring regional impacts and uniting regional players behind shared standards and land use practices.

Advocate for a National Strategy

A broader national strategy governing digital infrastructure would improve and refine policy options for decision-makers at the local level and provide consistency across the country through minimum development standards and performance measures. A national strategy would help to avoid local governments being pitted against each other in a 'race to the bottom' in order to secure investment and would support smaller municipalities who may have limited resources to assess proposals and navigate negotiations.

Additionally, a national strategy could fill in policy gaps relating to managing operations and decommissioning. There is a lack of standard end-of-lifecycle processes, including brownfield remediation, in the context of data centres.

Case Study: Kamloops Motion to FCM to advocate for the development of a Federal data centre framework

Kamloops councilors Dale Bass and Nancy Bepple put forward a motion for council to request the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) advocate to the federal government for the development of a coordinated policy framework respecting data centres. Councillor Bass emphasized that the task of defining regulations and oversight for data centres is excessively onerous for each individual municipality to undertake. The development of a national framework would provide a level playing field across the country. The motion passed, and the community is in discussion with FCM.

