

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE SMITHFIELD ZONING ORDINANCE,

**ARTICLE 2 ENTITLED “DEFINITIONS,”
AND ARTICLE 4 ENTITLED “USE REGULATIONS,”
SECTION 4.3, “TABLE OF USES,”
RELATING TO DATA CENTERS**

**Revised Draft for Town Council Consideration
Incorporates revised definition of “Data Center” and removal of review provision.**

Summary Explanation

This ordinance amends the Smithfield Zoning Ordinance to address the emergence of Data Centers as a distinct land use with infrastructure demands and operational characteristics that are not presently evaluated or regulated under the Town’s zoning framework. The ordinance adds a definition of “Data Center” to Article 2 (Definitions) to clearly identify and distinguish this use from traditional office, warehouse, or industrial facilities, and amends Article 4, §4.3 (Table of Uses) to list Data Centers as Not Permitted (N) in all zoning districts.

These amendments establish a precautionary, interim control intended to protect the public health, safety, and welfare while the Town undertakes additional research and coordination regarding infrastructure capacity, utility system impacts, energy demand and reliability considerations, potential ratepayer and fiscal impacts, land use compatibility, cumulative effects, and the development of appropriate zoning classifications, siting criteria, and performance standards. This ordinance does not permanently prohibit Data Centers. The Town expressly intends to revisit this matter following completion of further technical and policy analysis to determine whether, and under what conditions, this use may be appropriately accommodated in the future.

THE TOWN OF SMITHFIELD HEREBY ORDAINS:

Section 1. Amendment to Article 2, “Definitions.”

Article 2, “Definitions,” of the Smithfield Zoning Ordinance is hereby amended by adding the following definition in alphabetical order (Additions shown in underline with blue font; deletions shown in strikethrough.):

Data Center

A building, structure, facility, or portion thereof, or a group of buildings, structures, or facilities located on a single site or on contiguous sites, used as a principal use for the storage, processing, transmission, or management of digital data or applications using computer servers, data storage equipment, network equipment, and associated mechanical, electrical, cooling, and backup-power systems.

This term includes colocation facilities, cloud computing facilities, artificial intelligence computing facilities, enterprise computing facilities, edge computing facilities, and similar computing operations, whether operated for a single user or multiple users.

This term does not include server rooms, network closets, telecommunications equipment, or similar information-technology infrastructure that is accessory and subordinate to another permitted principal use and intended solely to support the on-site operational needs of that principal use.

Section 3. Effective date

This Ordinance shall take effect 30 days after passage by the Town Council and adoption in accordance with the provisions of the Smithfield Town Charter and the Rhode Island Zoning Enabling Act, R.I. Gen. Laws § 45-24-51 et seq.

Adopted by the Smithfield Town Council on May 5th, 2026.

Attest: [Signature]
Town Clerk

Attest: [Signature]
Council President

Attest: [Signature]
Town Solicitor

