PROPOSED DATA CENTRE PROJECTS IN OLDS

INVEST
OLDS

Table of Contents

PROPOSED DATA CENTRE PROJECTS

The Town of Olds is trying to attract Data Centres to support our local economy and align with Provincial Priorities. Any data centre development must be done responsibly and there are various levels of responsibilities and approvals.

Two private data centre projects are proposed in Olds
- Data District Inc
- Synapse Data Centre Inc.

Data District Inc.

Data District **has not submitted any documentation or applications**, so information is limited.

Synapse Data Centre Inc.

Synapse **has submitted a development permit** & begun its public engagement process

IMPORTANT!

While both projects will be similar they are not the same. Most of the information we have is regarding the Synapse project and so most of our information will focus on that.

More information can be found at **www.olds.ca/datacentres**

Synapse Data Centre Inc.

Synapse Data Centre Inc.

Proposed Site Map

Roles & Responsibilities

Town of Olds
- Land use and zoning.
- Municipal servicing and compatibility.
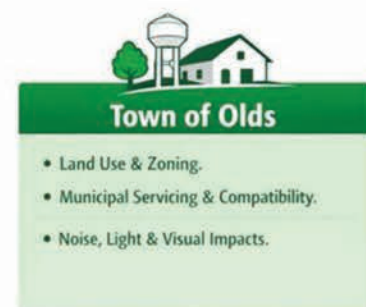- Noise, Light, and Visual Impacts.

Province of Alberta:
- Regulates energy facilities and major industrial approvals.
- Sets environmental, health, and safety standards.
- Sets Data Centre Policy & Attracts Data Centres to the Province.

Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC)
- Regulates natural gas usage and co-location of facilities at data centres.
- Requires a public engagement process to occur, which has begun.
- Also requires emissions testing and noise impact assessments prior to approval.

Alberta Environment and Protected Areas (AEP)
- Regulates water usage for Data Centres and emissions guidelines.
- Requires a public notification process, which is expected to start soon.

Town of Olds
- Land Use & Zoning.
- Municipal Servicing & Compatibility.
- Noise, Light & Visual Impacts.

Province of Alberta
- Regulates Energy Facilities & Major Industrial Approvals.
- Sets Environmental, Health & Safety Standards.
- Sets Data Centre Policy & Attracts Data Centres to Alberta.

Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC)
- Regulates Natural Gas & Co-Location at Data Centres.
- Public Engagement Required (Now Underway).
- Emissions Testing & Noise Assessments.

Alberta Environment & Protected Areas (AEP)
- Regulates Water Usage & Emissions for Data Centres.
- Public Engagement Required (Starting Soon).

How Decisions are Made

This is a multi-year process and these are proposed data centres.
Public input is part of the review.

A private company identifies Alberta as a potential location

The Province of Alberta actively promotes data centre investment as part of its economic strategy.

A developer approaches a municipality

A private developer explores specific communities that may meet their needs for land, servicing, and location.

Land is secured

The developer may purchase or option private land within the community.

Municipal planning review begins

The Town reviews whether the proposed use fits existing zoning and land use policies.

- If zoning changes are required, a development application and public hearing are required.
- If the use is already permitted, a development permit is still required.

Public notice and public input

Residents are notified through Town communication channels and have opportunities to provide input to Council.

Council's role

Council considers land use, servicing, compatibility, and community impacts. Council can approve, refuse, or impose conditions within its municipal authority.

Provincial regulatory review

Separate from municipal processes, the developer must apply to provincial regulators.

- Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC)
- Alberta Environment and Protected Areas (AEP)

Provincial decision

The Province may approve, impose conditions, or deny the project.

IMPORTANT: Municipal approval alone does not authorize construction. Multiple levels of approval are also required.

Town of Olds Process - Whats Happening Now?

Rezoning

- All industrial areas in the Town of Olds are zoned for Data Centres (since June 2025)
- January 26th rezoned to remove highway commercial uses to support large industrial development in the Northeast Area.
- February 9th Public Hearing to zone 1 parcel to industrial (currently zoned urban reserve and 'future industrial' in the Town's Municipal Development Plan)

Development Permit

- A development permit was submitted on January 30th and is now under review.
- Data Centres are considered a 'Discretionary Use', meaning public circulation will occur.
- Circulation will begin in a few days.

Building Permit

- No building permit applications have been submitted yet. This typically takes place following the development permit process.
- The building permit review process ensures that all structures are constructed in compliance with all federal and provincial safety standards, including fire and building codes.
- Inspections take place at key stages throughout construction and permits are not closed until full compliance is achieved.

Data Centre FAQ on olds.ca to share public information.

Public Engagements & Information to Date

- May & June 2025
  - Land Use Bylaw Amendment + Public Hearing to add a Data Centre use to all light industrial districts.
- June - October 2025
  - Land Use Bylaw Review Process to move Data Centres from a permitted use to a discretionary use, to allow more control over their development.
  - Online surveys, open houses, pop-up engagements, and public hearing were held.
- January 12, 2026 Council Presentation
  - Door Knocking by Town Councillors
  - Bylaw 2025-11 added data centre as a permitted use in all light industrial properties while rezoning the former SNDL land to this district.

Town of Olds Process - Whats Happening Now?

Future & Current Public Engagements

- February 4 Open House
- February 5 Public Engagement Session (Developer Led / No Town Involvement)
- February 9 Rezoning
- Development Permit Circulation (Date TBD)
- Future Open Houses (Dates TBD)

Issues & Decisions OUTSIDE the Town's Scope

To hear more about these issues, consider attending the Synapse engagement session on February 5ᵗʰ at the Werklund Centre @ Olds College.

WATER

Who approves it?

- Alberta Environment & Protected Areas approves all industrial water use.

What do we know so far?

- Synapse is proposing a closed-loop system
- There would be a one-time fill would take an estimated 500 – 1,000 cubic meters of water to fill each building
- The natural gas co-location, an estimated 1,200 cubic meters a month is required, representing approximately 1.5% of the Town's current monthly consumption.
- The Town uses approximately 80,000 cubic meters of water a month.

ELECTRICITY

Who approves it?

- Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC)
- Alberta Energy System Regulation (AESO)

What do we know so far?

- **Synapse** does not propose to connect to the grid for computing power nor redundancy.
- **Data District** does propose a partial grid connection based on previously built & approved electrical capacity.

Where will Synapse get its power from?

- Natural gas.

Issues & Decisions OUTSIDE the Town's Scope

NATURAL GAS

Who approves it?
- Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC)

What do we know so far?
- Synapse plans to acquire natural gas from nearby suppliers to generate 1.4GW of electricity for computing purposes.
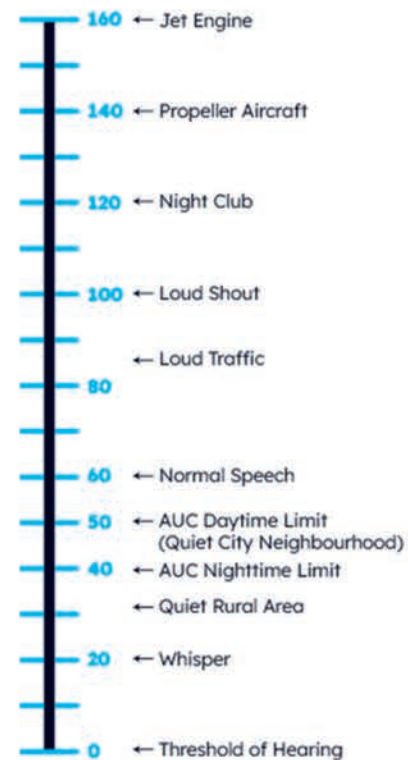
What about noise and emissions?
- Both require assessments by and approvals from the AUC.

TRAFFIC & ROAD SAFETY

Who approves it?
- Alberta Transportation & Economic Corridors (ATEC)

What do we know so far?
- A Traffic Impact Assessment was completed for this area during the Area Structure Plan (ASP).
- ATEC is currently reviewing it.
- There will be access points from Hwy 2A and Hwy 27 to minimize the congestion at the 2A/27 intersection.

160 ← Jet Engine

140 ← Propeller Aircraft

120 ← Night Club

100 ← Loud Shout

← Loud Traffic

80

60 ← Normal Speech

50 ← AUC Daytime Limit (Quiet City Neighbourhood)

40 ← AUC Nighttime Limit

← Quiet Rural Area

20 ← Whisper

0 ← Threshold of Hearing

Why Council Supports Attracting Data Centres

Community-level benefits

- Broader tax base
- Less pressure on residential taxes
- Long-term financial stability of Town
- 3000+ construction and skilled technical jobs
- Aligns with provincial economic strategy

Big Picture:

The goal is thoughtful growth, not growth at any cost. Growth helps maintain the services residents value as costs rise.

7,000 JOBS CREATED

Each direct job creates six jobs

*Based on 6:1 employment multiplier industry model, PwC Report

LOCAL ENERGY

Buying energy from local natural gas plants stabilizes plants longterm

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Exploring partnerships with local colleges to provide youth with training

2,000 CONSTRUCTION JOBS

A multi-year construction pipeline provides long-term stability for regional tradespeople

1,000 PERMANENT JOBS

Roles in engineering, IT, and site operations

+100M LITERS OF WATER SAVED

Our closed-loop energy plant saves water annually and cuts our carbon footprint

Preparing for Potential Growth

Economic growth is important for our Town to remain vibrant and financially sustainable.

- We want to grow responsibly.
- Provincial building will never build an additional school or expand a hospital in a town that is not growing
- Housing developers and doctors want to invest a community that seeks to progress.

Housing

These developments won't appear or scale overnight nor will every employee live in Olds. However, in 2025 the Town adopted our first housing strategy and has seen 2 years of record housing starts. We are working hard to keep this momentum going and expect more housing announcements soon.

Health Care

- ·Doctors: With the addition of a 3rd medical clinic in 2025, there are currently no active people on the wait list for a family doctor. There is capacity here and we will work to ensure the situation remains that way.
- ·Hospital: The Olds Hospital will soon begin an expansion for dialysis, which will the help support more acute care beds. But this is not enough. We continue to lobby the province on expanding surgical capacity as well.

Preparing for Potential Growth

Schools

There is a plan with both school divisions to construct 2 new schools in the coming decade.

- ·Public School: We have land dedicated in the Vistas Community for a future public school, which is currently on Chinook's Edge School Division priority list.
- ·Catholic School: Red Deer Catholic has a longer time frame, as Holy Trinity School is not operating at capacity; however, we will remain engaged with them as demand shifts.

Public Transit

A transit study commenced in January 2026 and will determine the most realistic 'next step' for public transportation in Olds. This will help us understand current demand and service gaps, what level of population growth may trigger a higher service level, and provide recommendations for both incremental improvements and long-term planning to ensure transit needs remain addressed.

The Town of Olds is conducting a Community Transit Service Study to understand the mobility needs of the Olds community and explore the feasibility of implementing a right-sized transit solution.

Date: Monday, February 9, 2026
Time: 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM
Location: Olds Family and Community Support Services (Community Connection Centre), 4911 51 Avenue

Visit **www.olds.ca/engagement** to learn more.

Safety & Environmental Protection

How risks are regulated and managed

Data centres are regulated industrial facilities. They must meet provincial safety and environmental standards before they can be approved or operate.

Fire Safety

- Fire suppression systems, alarms, and emergency response plans are required.
- Local fire services review site access, hydrant locations, and response considerations as part of development permitting.
- The risks are no greater than current infrastructure and industry located in our area, and can be managed with strategies in place for community growth and increasing demands for service.
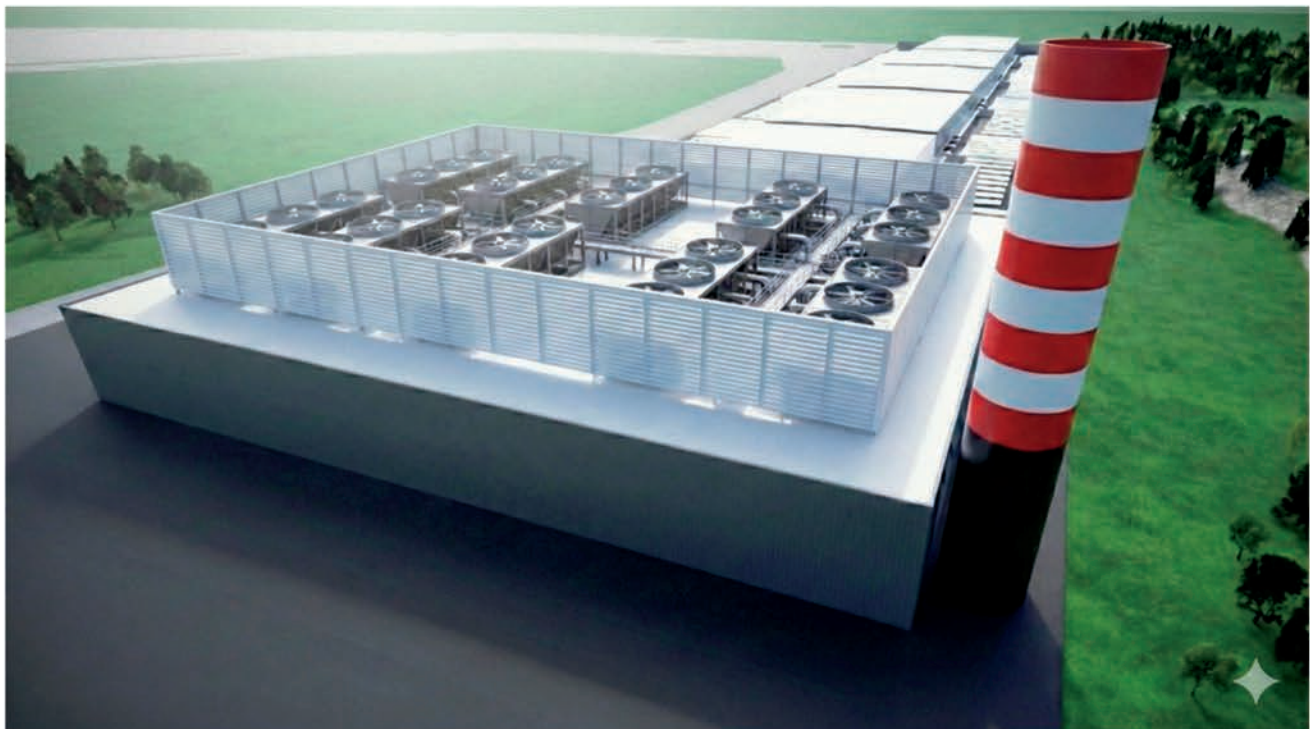
Safety & Environmental Protection

Air Quality & Emissions

- Any on-site power generation other backup systems must meet provincial air emission limits and regulations through the Alberta Ambient Air Quality Objectives Compliance.

Noise

- Noise must comply with provincial noise standards.
- Noise impact assessment is being conducted and must meet or exceed AUC Rule 012 Noise Control
- Mitigation measures can be imposed if needed.

Water & Environmental Protection

- Closed-loop cooling. One-time system fill only.
- Stormwater and spill prevention plans are required.
- Environmental protection measures are reviewed through provincial processes.

Electrical & Industrial Safety

- Electrical systems must meet provincial and national safety codes.
- Worker safety is regulated by Alberta Occupational Health and Safety.

Myths & Misinformation

Are the Data Centres already approved?

- No data centres have been approved. Two are being proposed.

Is the Town of Olds financially involved in data centre development or offering tax breaks?

- No, the Town of Olds is not financially involved in either data centre proposal is not offering any tax breaks to either developer.

Would these projects have saved O-NET and paid off its debt?

- No, data centres will not connect to the O-NET fibre, but directly to the transit fibre connecting Olds to Calgary.

What if the Data Centres go bankrupt and the buildings abandoned?

- This is a risk with any industrial development but even vacant buildings owe property taxes and are required to maintain their grounds according to Town bylaws.

Are data centres harmful to human health?

- Data centres do not emit harmful radiation or frequencies.
- For natural gas co-location, strict emissions testing needs to be done prior to approval.

Myths & Misinformation

Can the Town adequately respond to potential fires at a data centre?

- Yes. Data centres are designed with multiple layers of fire prevention and suppression built into the facility.
- The Olds Fire Department is trained and equipped to respond to industrial and commercial fires and already plans for facilities with specialized risks.

Will this development affect property values in Olds?

- While no solid information exists for Canada, the Town believes that higher economic activity generally results in higher property values. But regarding data centre and property values, one relevant study from November 2025 (Keither Waters and Terry Clower) on the housing market near Virginia's 'Data Centre Alley', found homes near data centres saw consistently higher values than homes further away from them.

What about preserving farmland?

- This land was annexed in 2020 for the purposes of industrial development. It is going to be removed from ag production eventually regardless of the development.