

Keystone Data Center Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Due to increased public inquiries regarding the permitting and approval processes for the Keystone Data Center project, the City of Reno has prepared the following Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) to help provide clear and accurate information.

1. How was the public informed about the Keystone Data Center project?

The City of Reno received an application for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) in Fall 2024 for the Keystone Data Center project. As part of the standard review process, staff evaluated the proposal for compliance with Reno Municipal Code (RMC) and coordinated with relevant outside agencies. The City also mailed courtesy notices (postcards) to all property owners within 750 feet of the project site to inform them of the request and invite public input.

In addition, yellow public notice signs were posted on the project site, and formal public hearing notices were sent again to all property owners within 750 feet at least 10 days prior to the Planning Commission meeting. This notification process ensures that community members are aware of the proposal and have an opportunity to provide comments, ask questions, and share concerns for consideration by City staff and the Planning Commission.

2. When was the Keystone Data Center approved for a Conditional Use Permit?

The Keystone Data Center was approved for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) on January 15, 2025. The project underwent a full review by City staff and outside agencies and was subsequently approved by the Reno Planning Commission. No appeals were filed following the Commission's decision, allowing the project to proceed to the building permit stage.

3. What is included in the Conditional Use Permit application?

A CUP application includes a high-level project design that illustrates the overall site layout and key development features. This typically includes proposed site grading, landscaping plans, parking layout, building renderings, building location and setbacks, fencing plans, and methods for screening mechanical equipment. City staff review these materials to determine whether the proposal conforms to the requirements of the Zoning Code.

Detailed construction documents are not part of the CUP process. Specific engineering, structural, mechanical, electrical, and architectural details are reviewed during the building permit plan review phase.

4. Who reviews the building permit?

All building permits undergo an extensive, multi-departmental review to ensure compliance with applicable codes and regulations. This review process includes evaluation by the:

- Planning Department
- Engineering Department
- Building Department
- Health Department
- Fire Department

Each department reviews the permit for its specific area of responsibility to ensure the project meets all required standards before a permit can be issued. Any changes or revisions to the building design are also reviewed.

5. How does the City of Reno ensure that what is approved on the building permit is constructed?

Once a building permit is issued and construction begins, City of Reno Building Inspectors conduct onsite inspections to verify that the work is being completed in accordance with the approved plans and applicable codes. Inspections occur at multiple stages of construction, including grading, foundation work, structural framing, electrical, mechanical, plumbing, and final completion. Construction cannot move forward to the next phase until each required inspection is approved. This process ensures the project is built as approved and meets all life-safety and code requirements.

6. How is power usage regulated?

Power usage is not regulated by the City of Reno. Electricity service and demand are administered by NV Energy, which is regulated by the Nevada Public Utilities Commission (PUCN). Any changes or increases in power demand for a project are reviewed and approved solely by NV Energy and the PUCN, not by the City of Reno.

7. How is water usage regulated?

Water usage is not regulated by the City of Reno. Water service, capacity, and demand are overseen by the Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA). Any changes or increases in a project's water demand are reviewed and approved by TMWA, not by the City of Reno.

8. What happens if the Keystone Data Center wants to change their cooling system?

During the building permit review, the applicant proposed a change to the originally presented cooling system. Planning staff required the applicant to update the acoustical study to confirm that the modified system remained substantially

consistent with the information reviewed by the Planning Commission and continued to meet all applicable noise mitigation requirements. In addition, the applicant provided documentation from the Truckee Meadows Water Authority verifying- that the change in equipment would not result in a significant increase in overall water demand.

9. Can a glycol cooling system be used for the data center cooling?

Glycol cooling systems are commonly used in industrial and commercial HVAC applications, including existing facilities in Reno. These systems typically use relatively low volumes of propylene glycol, which is considered non-toxic. When maintenance or replacement is required, propylene glycol may be discharged into the sanitary sewer system in accordance with applicable regulations.

Some cooling systems use ethylene glycol in addition to propylene glycol. In those cases, disposal of the ethylene glycol is coordinated with the City of Reno Environmental Control Division. Ethylene glycol must be collected, containerized, and hauled away by a licensed hazardous-materials disposal company rather than discharged into the sewer system.

10. How is the Keystone Data Center addressing noise impacts?

An acoustical study prepared for the project evaluated existing ambient noise levels at the site and determined that the lowest nighttime ambient noise level is approximately 53 dBA. To avoid increasing this baseline, noise generated by the data center's equipment must be reduced to approximately 43 dBA at the property line. This was part of the Conditional Use Permit approval process.

To mitigate noise, the project will be installing a 15-foot tall acoustically absorptive barrier around all rooftop chillers. This barrier is necessary to ensure compliance with the City's zoning code noise standards. Any changes to the building design, including the size and number of chillers and generators, will have to comply with mitigating the noise levels, and may require additional absorptive barriers. This is performed through the building permit review and inspection process.

11. How will the noise concerns be enforced once the data center is operational?

The City of Reno's Code Enforcement Division has noise monitoring equipment and will be able to measure operational noise levels at the site to verify compliance with zoning code standards and the project's required noise mitigation measures. If the facility is found to be out of compliance, enforcement actions will follow the Reno Municipal Code enforcement process until the violation is corrected.

12. How does the City of Reno ensure that the emergency backup generators won't be used on a 24-hour basis?

Backup generators are not unique to data centers and are commonly used for facilities such as hospitals, casinos, industrial operations, and grocery stores. The Keystone Data Center's Conditional Use Permit specifically requires that the emergency backup generators may only be operated during power failures and during necessary periodic testing or maintenance, which must occur during daytime hours only. Any use of the generators outside these restrictions is subject to enforcement by the City of Reno Code Enforcement Department.

13. How can I stay engaged in broader data center topics?

The Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency (TMRPA) has embarked on a regional engagement effort regarding data centers. This includes meeting with stakeholders, the public, and other entities involved. It is anticipated that the information acquired through the engagement process, as well as best practices review, will culminate in a regional priorities policy report that will help guide each local jurisdiction (Reno, Sparks, and Washoe County) in developing additional regulations and standards for data center development. To learn more about their effort, please visit: <https://tmrpa.org/energy-and-data-centers/>

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14. Why was construction of the Keystone Data Center taking place outside of the approved construction hours?

Condition # 8 of the Conditional Use Permit limits construction hours to between 7:00 am and 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday, and between 8:00 am and 6:00 pm on Saturdays. No construction is permitted on Sundays. However, as is common practice for many projects involving large concrete pours, such as schools, warehouses, manufacturing buildings, etc., it is necessary to start concrete pours in the early morning hours based on batch plant operations in the region. For this reason, Reno Municipal Code allows the Administrator to grant deviations from standard construction hours with advance notice and schedule of when the operations will take place. Clark Construction received approval for extended working hours on several specific dates and times during the months of May and June to accommodate concrete pours. The approved concrete pours allowed for staging to begin at 4:00 am and the pours to start at 5:00 am on these dates only.

Construction hours are otherwise restricted to between 7:00 am and 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday, and between 8:00 am and 6:00 pm on Saturdays. Any

construction activity taking place outside of these hours should be reported to Reno Direct and Reno's Code Enforcement Division will investigate.

15. Residents in the surrounding areas say they did not receive notification of the project or construction. How does noticing work?

Building permits and typical construction activity do not require public noticing, which can sometimes cause confusion.

The Keystone Data Center did go through a Conditional Use Permit review process in January 2025. CUP applications do require public notice, and in this case two rounds of public notice postcards were mailed prior to the public hearing:

- First notice: When the CUP application was initially submitted, public notice postcards were mailed to all property owners within 750 feet of the project site.
- Second notice: Another set of public notice postcards was mailed out ahead of the Planning Commission hearing.
- A large yellow sign was posted on the project site that notified the public of the Reno Planning Commission hearing date and time and a description of the project.
- Public hearing: The project was heard and approved at public meeting of the Reno Planning Commission on January 15, 2025.