



TOWNSHIP OF OLD BRIDGE
Office of the Mayor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 24, 2026

**TOWNSHIP OF OLD BRIDGE MAYOR DEBBIE WALKER STATEMENT
REGARDING TOWNSHIP ORDINANCE TO INCLUDE DATA CENTERS AS A
PROHIBITED USE IN ALL ZONING DISTRICTS WITHIN THE TOWNSHIP OF OLD
BRIDGE**

OLD BRIDGE TOWNSHIP, NEW JERSEY.

At the Township Council's meeting conducted on June 9, 2026, a majority of the Council moved to have the Township draft an Ordinance for consideration by Council that would prohibit data centers as a permitted use in the Township of Old Bridge.

While the proposed ordinance seeks to add "data centers," as defined in the ordinance, as a non-permitted use in all of the Township's zoning districts, it should be noted that currently, under the Township's Land Development Ordinance, data centers are not identified as a permitted use in any of the Township's zoning districts. Additionally, the Township's Land Development Ordinance already includes a provision (§250-39 entitled "Regulation of uses"), that specifically states:

Any use not specifically listed as a permitted use, an accessor use or a conditional use shall be deemed a prohibited use. This provision shall be liberally construed as protective of the Township's zoning scheme and the public health, safety, morals and general welfare. Any doubt as to the permitted nature of any use shall be resolved in interpreting the doubtful use as prohibited.

Therefore, while the ordinance provides a definition for data centers, currently, data centers are not listed as a permitted use in any of the Township's existing zoning districts.

There are two redevelopment plans previously adopted by the Township Council currently permit data centers as permitted uses in certain, but not all, areas of the designated redevelopment areas – the Crossroads Redevelopment Plan initially adopted in May 2004 (the "Crossroads Redevelopment Plan") and the Redevelopment Plan for the Intersection of Jake Brown Road and Hwy 9 and the Intersection of White Oak Lane and Jake Brown Road that was initially adopted in August 2021 (the "Jake Brown Road, Hwy 9 and White Oak Lane Plan").

Although the Township Council adopted the Crossroads Redevelopment Plan in May 2004, since that time, there have been no applications from potential redevelopers that included data centers. In fact, more recently, a previously designated conditional redeveloper advised the Township that it would not be possible to contract a data center due to lack of sufficient electricity in the area.

Additionally, the redeveloper of the Jake Brown Road, Hwy 9 and White Oak Lane Plan already received approval on the properties where data centers were permitted, and the approval did not include data centers.

Since data centers are currently not permitted in any zoning district, any proposal would already require an application for a use variance, which will not change if the proposed ordinance is adopted. In that regard, municipalities are limited in their ability to actually “stop” any development, as the Municipal Land Use Law permits an applicant to seek a use variance from the Zoning Board of Adjustment to the extent the use is not permitted.

Consequently, given the limited abilities of municipalities, including Old Bridge, to actually stop the construction of additional data centers, it is the Governor and State Legislature that must act in order to put a halt to future construction of data centers. However, despite the pleas and urging of over 60 groups seeking to stop further development, neither the Governor or State Legislature have moved forward with enacting legislation that would either completely stop further construction of data centers or significantly limit the future development of data centers.

While I applaud Council’s efforts in this regard, I urge all residents and those concerned to contact Governor Sherill and their respective members in the State Legislature to enact significant and appropriate legislation to address the future construction of data centers in New Jersey.