

Text Amendment Concerning Data Centers and Cryptomining Operations (TXT-2026-002)

The Unified Development Ordinance of Union County, North Carolina shall be amended as follows below.

Section 25.010, Allowed Uses

Add the following uses to Table 25-1, Table of Allowed Uses, under the “Other” Use Category:

Data Centers shall be permitted in the HI Heavy Industrial District through a Special Use Permit.

Cryptomining Operations shall be permitted in the HI Heavy Industrial District through a Special Use Permit.

Section 25.020, Use Categories

Add the following new subsections, 25.020-I (4) and (5):

4. Data Centers

A data center is a facility used primarily for housing, operation, storage, management, processing, or transmission of digital data through servers, networking equipment, telecommunications systems, AI processing systems, or similar technologies. Includes accessory infrastructure such as cooling systems, backup generators, substations, battery storage, security, and utility infrastructure.

5. Cryptomining Operations

A facility or operation utilizing computer systems, servers, or specialized processing equipment for the purpose of validating blockchain transactions, generating digital currency, or performing cryptocurrency mining activities.

Such facilities may include containerized systems, cooling systems, generators, transformers, and associated infrastructure

Section 30.210, Data Centers

Add the following new Section 30.210, Data Centers, which shall read as follows:

Section 30.210 DATA CENTERS

30.210-A Purpose and Intent

The regulations of this section are intended to promote economic development opportunities, as well as health, safety, and the general welfare, while ensuring compatibility with surrounding land uses; minimize adverse impacts associated with noise, lighting, backup power systems, water consumption, and utility demand; protect nearby residential areas, schools, and community facilities from operational impacts; and ensure adequate public infrastructure and utility capacity exists without impacts to the community. The regulations of this section apply to all data centers which establish as a new or expanded use as of the date of the original adoption of this Section 30.210.

30.210-B Definitions

See Article 105.

30.210-C Minimum Site Design Standards

1. Setbacks

- a) 100-foot minimum property line setback.
- b) 500-foot minimum setback from residential zoning districts or lots with existing dwellings present at time of establishment of the use.
- c) 1,000-foot separation from schools, daycare, assisted living, or similar congregate care uses.

2. Landscaping and Screening

Landscape screening that meets at least the minimum requirements for an S2 screen (see §55.090-C) must be provided along the outside area of the perimeter fenced to mitigate the visual impacts of the equipment buildings from nearby viewers. The permit-issuing authority is authorized to waive or modify these screening requirements upon determining that the existing topography or existing natural materials on the site will screen the property as effectively as the otherwise required screening. Outdoor equipment shall be screened in accordance with Section 55.080.

3. Lighting Standards

A lighting plan demonstrating compliance with the outdoor lighting regulations of [Section 55.130](#).

4. Noise Standards

- a) A pre-construction sound study shall be conducted and prepared by a qualified acoustical engineer at the property to establish a noise baseline, and the development shall include sound mitigation measures to ensure that noise levels from the data center and all associated equipment does not exceed levels observed during the baseline study.
- b) The administrator may require post-construction testing upon complaint or suspected violation.

5. Backup Power Generation Equipment

- a) Backup Power Generation Equipment may be used for temporary, emergency use only. Backup Power Generation Equipment shall not be used as a primary power source.
- b) Routine testing of Backup Power Generation Equipment or other outdoor equipment is limited to Monday–Friday, 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
- c) Fuel storage subject to fire code and NFPA standards.

6. Utility Capacity

- a) As part of a special use permit application, an applicant shall disclose estimated water demand and cooling system type. Closed-loop or water-efficient Cooling Infrastructure is required.
- b) Letters from water, and sewer utility providers, as applicable, verifying adequate water and sewer capacity for the use, are required as part of a special use permit application.
 - 1. As part of a special use permit application, an applicant shall submit documentation from the applicable electrical utility provider confirming:
 - a. Adequate electrical service capacity exists for the use;
 - b. Infrastructure upgrades are identified if needed;
 - c. A statement providing that service reliability for surrounding customers will not be adversely affected.
 - 2. The use of renewable energy sources or energy efficiency measures is encouraged.

7. Decommissioning

- a) Data centers inactive for more than 24 months are deemed abandoned.
- b) Owner shall remove abandoned equipment and stabilize site within 12 months.

Section 30.220, Cryptomining Operations

Add the following new Section 30.220, Cryptomining Operations, which shall read as follows:

Section 30.220 CRYPTOMINING OPERATIONS

30.220-A. Applicability

Cryptomining operations shall comply with all standards and follow all procedures applicable to Data Centers in § 30.210 unless modified by this section.

30.220-B. Additional Standards

- a) Outdoor containerized cryptomining operations equipment shall be prohibited.
- b) All cryptomining operations shall occur within fully enclosed buildings.
- c) Backup Power Generation Equipment may be used for temporary, emergency use only.
- d) The applicant shall submit an electrical demand study prepared by the serving utility provider.
- e) The County may require enhanced buffering or setbacks to mitigate operational impacts.

Section 105.030, Terms Beginning with “B”

Add the following new term in Section 105.030:

Backup Power Generation Equipment: Generators, fuel systems, battery storage, switchgear, or similar equipment intended for emergency power for a data center or cryptomining operations.

Section 105.040, Terms Beginning with “C”

Add the following new term in Section 105.040:

Cooling Infrastructure: Mechanical, evaporative, liquid, or air-based systems designed to regulate temperatures for a data center or cryptomining operations.