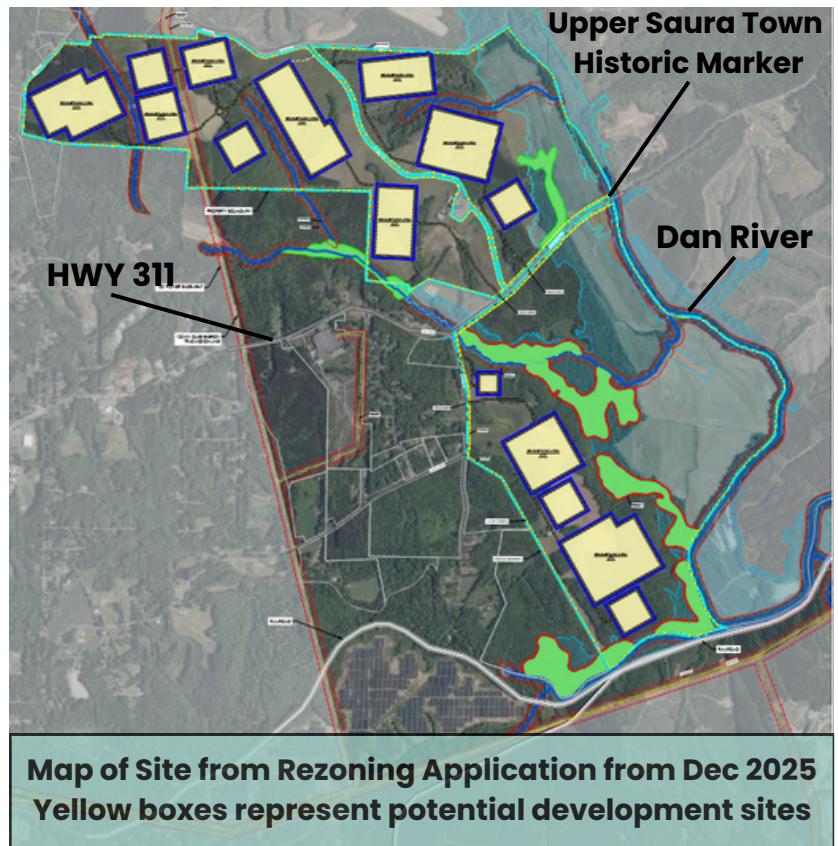


Did you know a data center could be proposed in Walnut Cove?

Data Center Details

- **What:** A data center complex proposed by Engineered Land Solutions.
- **Where:** 1848 acres of land on the **Dan River**, where Highway 311 crosses the Dan.
- Property next to Belews Creek coal plant.
- Developer's website on this project: from previous application) (projectdeltanc.com)



A Potential Threat to Historic, Cultural, & Natural Resources

- This land is **near** where the grave of the **Sauratown Woman** was found in 1972.
- The Saura site is also **culturally relevant to the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation**.
- The land the developers seek to rezone is home to a **historical home** of the **Hairston** family, which is now in disrepair.
- **Local descendants** of the **Hairston Family, Sally Blagg**, and the **Saura people, as well as local historians**, have expressed **concerns** that the site might have additional important archaeological or cultural resources that could be harmed or lost forever by a big industrial project.

Economic Concerns

- **Data centers do not employ many people long-term.** Construction jobs are temporary.
- **Risky investment:** Engineered Land Solutions is **not a tech company. They do not have a data center customer who plans to use this site.**
 - This plan depends on the bubble of demand for artificial intelligence (AI) to continue to grow. Experts are starting to warn of an AI bubble, similar to the dot com crash in the 2000s.
 - There is a risk of overbuilding AI data centers, beyond what the future demand for their computing power might be, which could leave communities with unused industrial sites.
- **Higher electric bills**
 - Nationally, data centers are one reason electric bills are rising 2x faster than inflation.
 - If the data center does connect to Duke Energy's grid, a new 2025 law **forces residential customers to pay an unfair share of fuel costs** for industrial customers like data centers.
- The proposal is **not** consistent with Stokes County's 2035 Land Use Plan, created through extensive public input.
 - 2035 plan describes this 1,844-acre area as "preserved land" & "reserved land."

Air Pollution

- AI data centers use tons of energy to run 24/7. The developer has said in meetings that they plan to run this data center **on methane gas generators 24/7** until they can connect to Duke Energy's grid.
- Burning methane releases air pollution that can increase asthma, COPD, heart conditions, and cancer risk to those exposed.
- According to NC DETECT, in 2024 Stokes County had 248 asthma-related ER visits in 2024. This is a rate of 54.2 visits per 10,000 residents. New sources of air pollution could make this worse.
- The site is close to Belews Creek coal plant, a major source of harmful air pollution.

Noise Pollution

- Data centers are noisy, mostly from generators and HVAC systems.
- The developers state that the data center property edge will have a maximum noise of 70db(A). This is comparable to a vacuum cleaner. However, this is loud compared to a natural area. Sound from an open field in nature is more like 30 db(A).

Water Usage

- The developer estimates daily water use up to 200,000 gallons per day.
- A "closed loop" system which requires chemicals to be added to water, and water recirculated for cooling. Eventually, the water does need to be replaced, leading to contaminated wastewater.
 - The land has very limited or no water and sewer infrastructure. If water is trucked in, there is no transparency on how much water is truly being used.
 - Walnut Cove's wastewater system is not set up to handle this water. Water might need to be trucked in and trucked out when they need to replace the water, leading to loud, large trucks on rural roads.
- **No strong oversight of data center water use.** A 2016 report by Uptime Institute found that fewer than one-third of data center operators track water consumption.

Water Pollution

- **The site is on the banks of the Dan River.** During construction, digging underground can lead to **runoff**, requiring water pollution controls. These water pollution controls can fail, **washing tons of sediment into rivers..**
- Data centers have a large amount of hard surfaces, such as roofs, parking lots, and buildings, that do not allow water to soak into the ground. This creates lots of stormwater runoff, **which can result in more flooding and pollution.**

More info & ways to take action:

bit.ly/scsdcw27052

cwfnfnc.org/stokes

Updates

On July 21, 2026, Developer Engineered Land Solutions submitted its new rezoning application. **On August 13, 2026**, the Stokes Planning Board voted 5-2 to deny the data center rezoning in Walnut Cove. Next, the County Commissioners will have a final vote on the rezoning for Project Delta. It is crucial to attend all Stokes Commissioners' meetings moving forward! The hearing date is not yet set.

Learn more + take action at bit.ly/scsdcw27052 & cwfnfnc.org/stokes

Questions? Email erika@cwfnfnc.org