

TA26-01 Ordinance 4 - Add Parking & Loading Standards (Article 30-5.A)

This ordinance is necessary because the UDO's standard parking and loading ratios don't fit how data centers actually function. If you apply typical industrial or commercial ratios to a use that has a very large floor plate but comparatively low routine staffing, you either overbuild parking (creating unnecessary pavement, stormwater, heat, and visual impacts) or you get inconsistent, negotiated outcomes case-by-case. The point here is to make the requirement predictable and proportional for a use that is infrastructure-heavy but people-light.

The parking minimum is structured around what actually generates demand. Tying parking to "accessory office/support areas" captures the only portion of a data center that behaves like a conventional workplace, where square footage correlates with people and visitors. Adding "one space per employee on the largest shift" then covers the core operations reality—security, facilities staff, network operations, and on-call presence—without letting the overall building size force a parking field that will sit empty. The visitor requirement (a small baseline plus a per-building component with a site cap) is a practical recognition that these facilities still get periodic site visits: inspectors, utility coordination, vendors, clients, auditors, and corporate staff. It ensures there is always some visitor capacity on-site, but the cap prevents visitor parking from ballooning into a de facto second parking standard.

The parking maximum—two times the minimum unless an Alternative Parking Plan is approved—is doing the land-use management work. It stops "just in case" overpaving that can undermine adjacent compatibility, increase runoff, and lock in a suburban parking footprint even in districts where the City is trying to manage impervious surface and site form. At the same time, it leaves a clear escape valve for unusual operational needs, phased build-out, or unique tenant patterns through the Alternative Parking Plan process, so the ordinance is firm by default but not rigid when facts justify flexibility.

The loading standard—one loading space per principal building—reflects the delivery pattern you can reasonably expect without over-prescribing. Data centers need regular but not constant freight activity: equipment swaps, parts deliveries, palletized IT hardware, mechanical replacements, and periodic contractor mobilizations. Requiring one space per building guarantees functional logistics capacity and keeps loading from spilling into drive aisles or fire lanes, while avoiding a higher ratio that would force unnecessary paved area for a use that is not a high-turnover distribution operation.

Overall, the ordinance is a calibration move: require enough parking and loading to run the use and support inspections and visitors, but prevent the code from accidentally incentivizing oversized asphalt that creates secondary impacts unrelated to the actual operation of a data center.