Dense urban neighborhood plan

Ask people along the truck route or across from a generator where noise readings should be taken. Let tenants and neighbors choose who speaks for them, and give people who work evenings a way to take part.

Noise at homes and schools

Before permits are issued, the operator pays a noise specialist chosen by residents to take daytime, nighttime and low-frequency readings at agreed homes and schools. Include existing traffic and industrial noise. Write the limits, hours, locations and test methods into the permit or agreement. Publish results when the campus opens and each month thereafter. Set a deadline to fix and independently retest a verified breach. Send permit violations to [agency].

Generator tests and complaints

Publish the list of permitted generators, scheduled tests, emergency rules and school contacts. Log testing hours separately from emergency runs. Independent monitors publish their readings and explain what they can measure. Residents can report noise or fumes without proving a violation. The operator responds in writing within [days]. List the local emergency contact for immediate danger. Residents may report a suspected permit violation directly to the air regulator without waiting for the operator’s reply.

Paid training for neighbors

Residents choose a training partner. Specify [paid places per class], [wage] and [budget], including transit or childcare. Publish eligibility and outreach rules. Report enrollment by service area and, after six months, completions, jobs, wages and retention without naming trainees. The independent fund holder checks fees and wages. If the operator misses its target, it pays for another class. Residents choose the remaining grants at a public meeting.

> In January 2026 the New Orleans council reported a temporary hold while planners studied zoning, sound mitigation and a possible one-year interim district. In Lancaster’s agreement, developers must provide a $10 million letter of credit at construction financing. Ask who may draw on security; a credit instrument is not cash received by residents.

South Memphis, Tennessee: tax revenue for home repairs

On November 13, the city reported a $3,259,282 approved allocation under Ordinance 5953, including $2 million for home repairs in the five-mile zone around Colossus I. The money comes from property taxes. The city had approved the repair budget; it did not report how many homes had been repaired.

Publish four columns: money collected, budget approved, awards made and repairs completed. Identify which residents qualify and how someone without internet access can apply.

Ciudad de la Costa, Uruguay: noise checks for each expansion

In Uruguay, the Los Teros environmental authorization (section 1(d), PDF) gave the developer 45 days after each module starts operating to send the regulator noise results from sensitive locations. Put a separate test date in your permit for each phase. Ask who gets the readings, when neighbors can see them and who orders a retest after repairs.

Quilicura, Chile: what happens after the cleanup?

In Chile, residents and schools helped clear informal dumps in a project with Google and the municipality. Ciudad Emergente, the nonprofit that led the work, reports that 180 tonnes were removed and a quarter was recycled. Its education center was still a proposal in that account. For a cleanup grant, ask for disposal receipts and a map of the cleared land. Name who will maintain it and how many years the grant covers.

Sample agreement

Project: [site and phases]. Parties: [landowner], [operator], [guarantor] and [community signatories]. Replace the brackets with local names, amounts and deadlines before anyone signs.

Resident representation

Residents choose their representatives at an open meeting. Include renters and neighbors outside the tax district. The developer pays for interpretation and an independent adviser from a separate account. Publish the draft for [review period] and respond publicly to suggested changes. Residents may participate and still oppose the project.

Payments to the community

The operator pays [fund holder] [amount] when [milestone] occurs, then [amount] each year, adjusted for inflation using [index]. Residents hold a majority of seats on the board that awards grants. The board publishes its conflict-of-interest rules; the treasurer posts receipts and spending every quarter. List taxes, tax breaks, infrastructure reimbursements and gifts separately from the promised payments.

Who can enforce each term

Put payments in the signed agreement, land-use restrictions in the permit and electricity charges in the approved utility terms. Ask local counsel who has authority to sign and enforce each one. Any right for residents to enforce the agreement must be written into it. The agreement cannot replace environmental review, public hearings or Tribal consultation, or change treaty rights.

Missed payments and complaints

Residents choose an independent monitor who can inspect invoices, meter readings and payroll with names removed. The operator deposits [annual monitoring budget] through closure. Each quarter the monitor publishes what was due, paid, late or disputed, with the supporting records. Residents can call [phone] or file with [office] online. The office acknowledges complaints within [days] and publishes outcomes without names. After written notice, the operator has [days] to fix a breach. Specify who may draw on [financial guarantee] if it does not, who decides disputes and where either party can appeal.

Sale or closure

Before construction, the owner provides a financial guarantee for the independently estimated cost of restoring the site. Update the estimate and guarantee every [interval]. Release the original owner only after a buyer accepts the obligations in writing and supplies replacement security. List payments that remain due if work stops early. Publish the signed schedules, amendments, annual audits and final inspection.

Payment and inspection record

Make a copy for each obligation:

- Work promised: [starting condition], [target and units], [deadline].
- Payment: [who owes it], [budget and source], [amount due], [amount paid], [recipient and date].

- Inspection: [who checks the work], [public record], [next review date].
- If the operator falls short: [who gives notice], [time to fix it], [remedy and who can use it].

For home repairs, for example, the budget shows what the city approved. A paid invoice and a final inspection show which repairs were finished. Record both.

Before the vote, read out any unresolved terms. Attach the payment and inspection records to the agreement. Record who signed, the vote date and where residents can get a copy.

If your community has a moratorium

Ask the clerk for the adopted text, amendments, effective and end dates, application map, and exemptions for existing approvals. A proposal, an advisory vote and an enacted pause have different effects. A dated tracker entry does not establish that a pause is still in force.

During a pause, use only the activities the text permits. Ask the authorized body to publish outstanding studies, resident objections and what remains unresolved before its next public decision. Compare a smaller project, delay, relocation and no project. A private agreement cannot lift a public restriction.

Find the jurisdiction in the tracker's Moratoriums directory.

Sources

For a public meeting, these guides can help residents decide which documents to request. Each local example links to the record it describes.

- NAACP: Stop Dirty Data — publish project impacts before bargaining over money; residents need time and independent advice.
- American Rivers: Data Centers and Rivers — ask separately about water withdrawn, water returned, discharge quality and who pays for new capacity (pp. 7–10).
- World Resources Institute: Powering Progress — distinguish who signs from who benefits; design training that gives workers options beyond a single campus.
- Federation of American Scientists: finding eight agreements — ask the clerk for executed contracts and exhibits; a promise to file a later plan leaves terms unsettled.
- Science for Georgia: community benefit agreements — name the person who measures compliance and the party able to enforce each requirement.

Compare these proposals with Microsoft's company-wide commitments on power, jobs and taxes. Ask who will sign for the local campus, how much is due and when. None of the organizations listed here has endorsed these drafts.

Editable draft and sources: https://pranava0x0.github.io/datacenterpolicytracker/community-benefits.html#urban