

**ORDINANCE AMENDING MANITOWOC COUNTY CODE CH. 8 ENACTING A
MORATORIUM ON DATA CENTERS**

TO THE MANITOWOC COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

WHEREAS, a “Data Center” is one or more facilities that house computing and networking equipment, along with storage and management systems, to support the storage, processing, retrieval, and distribution of digital data and applications; and

WHEREAS, data centers typically feature high-performance servers, storage arrays, networking equipment, cooling systems, and power backup solutions to ensure uninterrupted operation; and

WHEREAS, the towns of Mishicot, Two Creeks and Two Rivers (“Towns”) are under the zoning jurisdiction of Manitowoc County; and

WHEREAS, the Towns have requested a moratorium on the receipt of applications and the granting of permits relating to Data Centers; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 59.69(4), Manitowoc County may enact a moratorium that is not a “development moratorium” as that term is defined in Wis. Stat. § 66.1002(1)(b); and

WHEREAS, the Towns have concerns about potential health and safety issues related to the construction and operation of Data Centers, including electrical connections, electrical and magnetic fields, impacts on air quality and water resources, water use, electricity demand, and fire hazards; and

WHEREAS, the Towns have concerns that the construction and operation of Data Centers will result in an overburdening of public services and infrastructure in Manitowoc County, including electrical and water utilities, town roads, and fire and emergency services; and

WHEREAS, the Towns have concerns about the potential secondary impacts of the construction and operation of Data Centers, including impacts on property values, noise and visual impacts, and impacts on the public health, safety and general welfare of residents, businesses, and visitors; and

WHEREAS, the construction and operation of Data Centers is not consistent with existing county plans and ordinances including the Manitowoc County Comprehensive Plan, the Manitowoc County Farmland Preservation Plan, and the Farmland Preservation Zoning District; and

WHEREAS, the Manitowoc County General Zoning and Land Use Regulation Ordinance does not contain language addressing the location, construction, and operation of Data Centers; and

WHEREAS, a moratorium would allow the county to fully explore, analyze, and research the environmental, economic, health, and safety impacts of Data Centers and develop consistent zoning and regulatory standards to be applied to Data Centers in Manitowoc County; and

WHEREAS, the Planning and Park Commission conducted a public hearing on March 30, 2026, and after careful consideration and review, recommends that the county board amends chapter 8 of the Manitowoc County code and approves a moratorium;

NOW, THEREFORE, the county board of supervisors of the county of Manitowoc does ordain as follows:

Manitowoc County Code Section 8.045 is created to read as follows:

8.495 Moratorium.

- (1) For the purpose of this s. 8.495 “Data Center” means one or more facilities that house computing and networking equipment, along with storage and management systems, to support the storage, processing, retrieval, and distribution of digital data and applications.
- (2) Pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 59.69(4), Manitowoc County enacts the following moratorium: Notwithstanding any other provision in this ch. 8, there shall be a moratorium on the receipt of applications and the granting of all permits or approvals for the placement or construction of data centers. The purpose of the moratorium is to allow Manitowoc County time to research the possible environmental, economic, public health, safety, and general welfare effects of data centers and establish consistent zoning and regulatory standards to be applied to data centers in Manitowoc County and to allow the Planning and Park Commission to conduct hearings and make recommendations to the County Board regarding amendments to this or other county ordinances. The moratorium shall be in effect for a period of 12 months from the date this ordinance is published (*i.e.* its effective date) or until the County Board adopts and the County Executive approves amendments to this ordinance or rescinds this moratorium, or both. The moratorium enacted in this s. 8.495 is not intended to be, and does not, constitute a “development moratorium” as that term is defined in Wis. Stat. § 66.1002(1)(b).

and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that if applicable, the table of contents shall be updated to reflect this amendment; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that this ordinance shall be effective upon publication.

Dated this 24th day of April 2026.

Respectfully submitted by the
Planning and Park Commission

_____, Chair

FISCAL IMPACT: None.

FISCAL NOTE: Reviewed and approved by Finance Director. _____

LEGAL NOTE: Reviewed and approved as to form by Corporation Counsel. _____

COUNTERSIGNED: _____
_____, County Board Chair Date

APPROVED: _____
Bob Ziegelbauer, County Executive Date