GREENPLEX

Community Development Specification: Outline

It contains the requirements a county has identified and thought through. It provides a guide for negotiations with the county being in charge. Defensive items - protection, and offensive requirements, lasting benefits that are essential to an effective negotiation. Developers have something to work with, and it shows the constituency that a due diligence process has been followed.

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THE QUESTION BEHIND EVERY REQUIREMENT IN THIS DOCUMENT

If a community is going to host the infrastructure of the AI economy, how will the people who live there participate in it?

What this is

The Community Development Specification Outline (there is a more detailed specification available – a WIP) turns the usual sequence around. Instead of reacting to a developer's plan, the county writes down what any project must deliver, shares it with more than one qualified developer, lets them compete to meet it, and holds the winner to it for the life of the project.

An independent review by the World Resources Institute (September 2026) reached the same conclusion: benefit agreements fail when their terms are vague, and work when the community helps set clear, measurable terms from the start.

This outline lists the questions a complete set of requirements should answer, grouped in seven chapters, plus one set of protections that runs through all of them. It works alongside tools the county already has, such as a Technology Overlay District: the overlay sets where and how a data center may be built; the requirements set what the community receives in return and how it is enforced.

The items listed under each chapter (see 7 chapters, below) are examples. They show the kind of requirement that belongs in each chapter and the level of detail that makes one enforceable. A county keeps what fits its situation, writes its own, sets every number, and discards the rest. Chapters are a subset of requirements – examples only.

How the process works

This document covers steps 1 and 2 only. Defining and specifying the requirements is the county's own work and can be done at any time, with or without an application pending. Steps 3 through 6 follow later, once the county has settled what it wants.

STEP	WHAT HAPPENS	SCOPE
1 Define	The county decides which requirements matter to it.	**This document**
2 Specify	General goals become quantities, dates, standards and responsible parties.	**This document**
3 Compete	Qualified developers respond to the same published requirements.	Later
4 Evaluate	Responses are scored in public against published weights.	Later
5 Commit	Accepted promises go into the rezoning conditions and the Community Benefits Agreement.	Later
6 Verify	Performance is tracked for the life of the project, through any change of owner.	Later

Two kinds of requirements

The seven chapters divide into two purposes. Both are requirements.

PROTECTION	**What the community must not lose.** Limits, safeguards and enforcement: sound, water, ratepayers, land, roads, infrastructure cost, and the accountability that makes all of it hold. Chapters 1 and 6.
PARTICIPATION	**What the community gains.** The farm, the community and small-business center, workforce credentials, education and research access, and amenities — the ways residents take part in what the site produces rather than only living beside it. Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7.

The seven chapters

*Each chapter contains bullets are meant to **be illustrative only**, drawn from our full specification to show what a drafted requirement could look like. Technology Obsolescence addressed separately since it runs through all chapters.*

1. Data Center Oversight and Environment

PROTECTION

The question: *Who measures, how often, and what happens on a breach?*

For example:

- Sound limits measured at the nearest homes under worst-case operation, including low-frequency sound, with required abatement if exceeded.
- A water requirement matched to the county's situation: disclosure and audit, zero net new demand on the public system, aquifer monitoring with an automatic trigger, or a study before any site plan.
- Residential and small-business ratepayers held harmless for power infrastructure; utility cost-allocation letters on file before approval.
- Buffers, height, viewsheds, full-cutoff lighting and night-sky limits; prime farmland kept out of the footprint.
- Designated truck routes, a road-condition bond and school-zone limits; a funded fire and emergency-services assessment.

- A clear county position on infrastructure cost: no public cost, full cost recovery, or incentives earned only after milestones are met.

2. Farm Integration

PARTICIPATION

The question: *How much heat, delivered when, at what cost?*

For example:

- Waste heat and condensate delivered to a controlled-environment farm under a written agreement, with temperature, volume and availability specified.
- The farm built and operating before or alongside the data center, with production and jobs stated as milestones.
- The heat exchange survives a sale of either business, with backup heat if the data center reduces load.
- Farm placement can double as a buffer along the property edge.

3. Community and Small Business Center

PARTICIPATION

The question: *Who builds it, who runs it, and who can use it on what terms?*

For example:

- A public building sited so residents reach it without passing security, open evenings and weekends, and funded to operate, not just to build.
- Computing and AI access for schools, libraries, nonprofits and local businesses at published rates, delivered with training and support.
- Public services near the site where they are missing today, for example trails, a park, or a place to handle routine county business.

4. Workforce Development

PARTICIPATION

The question: *How many people, over what period, funded by whom, and measured how?*

For example:

- A floor of permanent operating jobs by phase, with wages tied to a goal; construction jobs not counted.
- Paid apprenticeships and portable credentials with the community college and school division, in committed numbers.
- AI literacy and reskilling open to residents who will never work at the data center.

5. Education and Research

PARTICIPATION

The question: *Which institutions, which programs, and who owns and shares the data?*

For example:

- STEM/STEAM programs with committed annual participation.
- Operating data (energy, water, heat, sound) published so residents and researchers can check performance for themselves.
- Research access for universities and colleges on published terms.

6. Governance

PROTECTION

The question: *Who decides, who benefits, and how does that survive a change of owner?*

For example:

- One accountable party for the whole project, regular public reporting, and a defined cure process for any breach.
- Payments to the county that scale with delivered performance, with clawback if commitments are missed.
- Every obligation runs with the land and binds any buyer.
- A standing community advisory group that receives all public reports and can refer concerns to the county.

7. Amenities

PARTICIPATION

The question: *Who builds and maintains them, and are they guaranteed if the project is downsized?*

For example:

- Green space, trails, recreation, art, a farmers market or gathering places, delivered with the first phase.
- Maintenance funded for the life of the project, or the amenity dedicated to the county with a maintenance payment.

Running through all seven: Technology Obsolescence and Exit

A county commits a site for 20 to 30 years; the servers turn over every 4 to 6 years, and an operator can leave long before the building wears out. Protections of this kind put that risk on the developer rather than the county. For example:

- Decommissioning security (bond, letter of credit or escrow) posted before land disturbance, sized by an independent engineer, with no credit for salvage value and updated every five years.
- A minimum annual payment to the county, backed by the parent company, regardless of what equipment is on site.
- A “dark site” trigger: if the building sits largely unused for a set period, a reuse or removal plan is required, and the county can draw on the security.
- Community benefits delivered or fully funded in the first years, and endowed so they continue if the developer leaves.

How responses are judged

- Weights are published upfront.
- A response that skips a requirement, or makes a benefit depend on a later agreement, fails.

Where each requirement sits in Virginia

In Virginia, a county can’t put every requirement into one document. The law decides which legal tool can carry which kind of promise. Some fit in rezoning conditions, some only in a signed Community Benefits Agreement, some are already in the county’s ordinance, and a few, like utility rates, are set by the state. This table shows where each kind of requirement belongs, so the county asks only for what it can actually enforce, and the County Attorney confirms each one before anything is adopted.

INSTRUMENT	WHAT FITS THERE
Rezoning proffers	Conditions the applicant offers voluntarily that are attributable to the project and near it: buffers, sound, lighting, roads, on-site and nearby facilities.

INSTRUMENT	WHAT FITS THERE
Community Benefits Agreement	The binding contract — revenue guarantees, milestone payments and clawbacks, benefits that reach beyond the immediate area, decommissioning terms, any incentives. This is what the Specification is written to produce.
Site plan and ordinance	Objective standards already in the ordinance or overlay district.
State-level matters	Utility cost allocation and rate design: stated as the county's position, pursued through intervention and the public record.

Suggested next steps

Choose the requirements that matter most to the county and set the values.

- Hold a public reading so residents can see what the county is asking for.
- Share the requirements with the applicant and any other qualified developer, and ask for written responses.

This high-level example template shows the areas that a detailed, fully researched Greenplex campus spec includes. Contact John May, jmay@greenplex.ai, for more info.