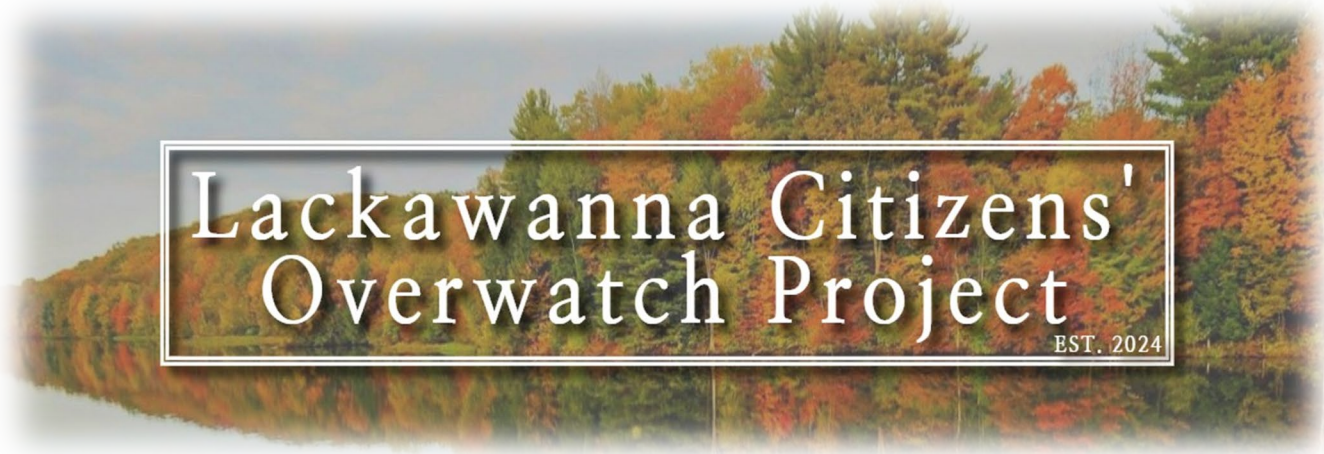
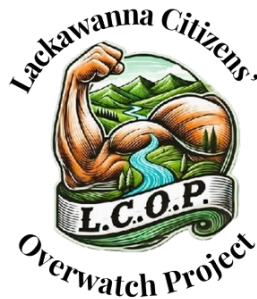




Lackawanna Citizens' Overwatch Project

EST. 2024

LACKAWANNA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA ARCHBALD, OLYPHANT, THROOP MUNICIPALITIES DATA CENTER SUMMARY



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I wanted to give you an update on what is happening with proposed data center development in **Archbald, Olyphant, Throop, PA**, three neighboring Lackawanna County municipalities that are now facing some of the largest and most complicated data center proposals in the region.

Olyphant and Archbald are only about 3-5 miles apart, depending on the points measured, and the proposed data center sites themselves are clustered within just a few miles of one another across the Mid Valley. Public project mapping places some of the Olyphant and Archbald proposals roughly 4 miles apart and Throop is neighboring Olyphant, **underscoring that these are not isolated developments but part of a much larger concentration of proposed data center infrastructure in the same region.**

Taken together, Olyphant and Archbald show that this is no longer a single-project or single-municipality issue. These proposals are being concentrated within only a few miles of one another, meaning residents throughout the Mid Valley could ultimately experience the combined impacts of data centers, substations, transmission lines, generators, power plants, water demand, noise, emissions and construction activity. **That is why we believe these communities provide an important real-world example of the need for stronger statewide protections and meaningful cumulative-impact review.**

***Please keep in mind that there are additional data center proposals throughout Lackawanna County. I am focusing on Archbald, Olyphant, Throop because these are the ones closest to home for me personally, and they are the projects I have been directly involved in following and researching. What is happening in these three municipalities should not be viewed in isolation from the broader wave of data center development being proposed across the county.*

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THROOP, PA

****APPLICANT WITHDREW THEIR APPLICATION****

Throop is now facing two major land-use issues at the same time: the creation of regulations for future data centers and a separate request involving warehouses/distribution facilities on land currently zoned Environmental Conservation.

DATA CENTERS

Earlier this year, Throop determined that its zoning ordinance did not specifically address data centers and began the process of creating a curative amendment and Data Center Overlay District.

Unlike what we have seen in some neighboring municipalities, Throop officials have said they are attempting to put regulations in place before a data center application is submitted.

The proposed overlay would identify where data centers could potentially be located and establish restrictions governing them. At recent meetings, officials discussed issues including setbacks, noise, environmental protections and the location of the overlay.

So far, Throop has repeatedly stated that there is no actual data center application currently pending in the borough.

That distinction is important: Throop is presently regulating where a future data center could go rather than approving a specific data center project.

However, because of the enormous amount of data center development occurring throughout Lackawanna County, we should continue watching this process very closely.

NOW THERE IS ANOTHER ISSUE: WAREHOUSES

At the September 1, 2026 Throop Planning Commission meeting, a separate item appeared on the agenda:

“Theta Land Group – Permissive text amendment request.”

The proposed amendment would change Throop's zoning ordinance so that “Warehouse and Distribution Facilities” **would become a use permitted by right** in the E-1 Environmental Conservation District. Whereas, as of right now “Warehouse and Distribution Facilities” are **Not Permitted** in the E-1 Zone.

A public hearing is scheduled for: **MEETING CANCELLED – APPLICANT WITHDREW THEIR APPLICATION**

Tuesday, September 15, 2026 - 5:30 PM
Throop Community Civic Center
500 Sanderson Street, Throop

Borough Council is then scheduled to consider adopting the amendment at its 6:00 PM meeting that same evening.

WHO IS THETA LAND GROUP?

This is where things get particularly interesting.

The Throop agenda specifically identifies the applicant as Theta Land Group.

Public records we have located more commonly identify a company called Theta Land Corporation, a major landholder in the Throop/Olyphant/Dunmore area with longstanding connections to **Louis DeNaples** and Pennsylvania Gas & Water Company interests.

County planning materials have identified Theta Land Corp. with approximately 1,625 acres in the Dunmore/Throop/Olyphant area.

However, before publicly stating that “Theta Land Group” and “Theta Land Corporation” are legally the exact same company, L.C.O.P. is continuing to verify the corporate connection and ownership.

What we do know is that the Theta name has substantial landholdings in this immediate area, and the actual amendment application should tell us exactly who is requesting this zoning change and what property is involved.

THE LOCATION MATTERS

This entire area deserves special scrutiny because Throop sits directly beside the proposed data center activity occurring in Olyphant.

Just across the municipal boundary, the Marshwood Road/Triboro Industrial Park area in Olyphant has already been the subject of major proposed data center development and litigation.

WHAT MAKES THROOP DIFFERENT SO FAR

Based on what we have seen at the meetings so far, Throop zoning officials appear to have been more proactive about establishing data center regulations before an application arrives.

The proposed data center area was also described as an attempt to place such development farther from residential areas and the school than other possible locations.

Those are positive signs. But after watching what has happened throughout Lackawanna County, we have every reason to continue asking questions and demanding documentation.

Trust comes from transparency.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN OLYPHANT, PA

BACKGROUND – THE PROPERTY WAS ORIGINALLY APPROVED FOR WAREHOUSE DEVELOPMENT

The Triboro Industrial Park property was originally approved for large-scale warehouse/industrial development. ERCOR Triboro is now seeking to develop a data center campus on property associated with those previously approved land development plans.

This distinction is important because ERCOR is not simply proposing another warehouse. In a May 21, 2026 zoning determination, Olyphant's own Zoning Officer referred to ERCOR's proposal as a "proposed change in use" from the land development plan previously approved by Borough Council on March 2, 2022.

APRIL 14, 2026 – THE DATA CENTER ORDINANCE VOTING DEBACLE

On April 14, Olyphant Borough Council considered a zoning amendment specifically establishing regulations for data centers and making them a conditional use in the CM-2 zoning district.

According to the official meeting minutes, Council initially voted **4–3 in favor of adopting the data center zoning amendment.**

However, the minutes state that there was noise from the audience, talking among Council members and confusion about what had just been voted on. The secretary requested that Council vote again to make sure the vote was heard correctly.

On the second vote, the result changed and the ordinance **failed 3–4**.

Council then amended the agenda and voted **4–3 to declare Olyphant’s existing zoning ordinance “substantively invalid” because it failed to provide for data center use and to pursue a municipal curative amendment.**

This later became the subject of litigation.

Ultimately, it was determined and confirmed by court order that the original April 14 data center zoning amendment had been validly enacted and was in effect.

That ordinance makes data centers a **conditional use**, not a by-right use, in the CM-2 district.

APRIL 22–23, 2026 – ERCOR SUBMITS ITS DATA CENTER APPLICATION

Only eight days after the April 14 Council meeting, ERCOR Triboro and its related LLCs submitted a zoning/building permit application on April 22 for the approximately 470-acre Triboro Industrial Park property.

On April 23, Olyphant Zoning Officer William Shigo sent ERCOR’s attorney a letter acknowledging that the Borough had received an application for a **“data center campus and related uses.”**

The application was initially deemed administratively incomplete because the required fees had not been submitted.

We also discovered through the records that communication between the property developer and the Borough goes back considerably further. On April 17, 2025 (approximately one year before the data center application) Shigo provided a formal zoning verification letter concerning this property to Chris Lee, Director of Acquisitions & Dispositions for Sansone Group.

That letter identified the uses permitted in the CM-2 district at that time. Warehousing and distribution were expressly listed; data centers were not.

That does not establish that Olyphant knew in April 2025 that Sansone/ERCOR intended to develop a data center. However, it establishes that Sansone was communicating with the Borough regarding the zoning status of this specific property at least a year before ERCOR submitted its formal data center application.

We are still trying to determine exactly when Borough officials first learned that the warehouse development was intended to become a data center campus.

MAY 21, 2026 – ZONING OFFICER DETERMINES DATA CENTER USE WAS NOT PROVIDED FOR

On May 21, Shigo issued a detailed written zoning determination regarding ERCOR's application.

He concluded that Olyphant's zoning ordinance, as he understood it at that time, **did not provide for a data center use.**

ERCOR argued that the proposed data center should be considered **“materially similar” to an already permitted use under the Borough's existing zoning ordinance**, essentially arguing that the data center could be treated similarly to the previously approved warehouse development. If accepted, ERCOR's position would allow it to proceed as a **“by-right” use rather than requiring a new conditional-use application and the associated conditional-use hearings and review process.**

Shigo rejected that argument.

After reviewing the Land-Based Classification Standards, he concluded that a data center was **not materially similar to any use listed in the Borough's zoning ordinance.**

Instead of the project ending there, however, Shigo directed the application to the Zoning Hearing Board for consideration as a **special exception.**

Importantly, Shigo also acknowledged that ERCOR intended to submit an amendment to the land development plan previously approved on March 2, 2022 in order to address ERCOR's **“proposed change in use.”**

That language is significant because ERCOR is now arguing that its previous approvals should allow the project to proceed without going through the new conditional-use process.

JUNE 16, 2026 – THE MAY 21 DETERMINATION IS WITHDRAWN

The situation changed again in June.

After the litigation concerning the April 14 Council vote was resolved, Shigo issued another letter on June 16.

He explained that it had now been determined and confirmed by court order that the data center zoning amendment adopted on April 14 was validly enacted and in effect.

Under that ordinance, data centers are permitted in the CM-2 district, **but only as a conditional use and subject to the applicable ordinance requirements and other approvals.**

Shigo therefore **withdrew and superseded his May 21 zoning determination.**

In other words, the issue was no longer whether ERCOR could obtain a special exception because data centers were missing from the zoning ordinance. The April 14 ordinance controlled, and that ordinance established a conditional-use process for data centers.

ERCOR'S LAWSUIT

ERCOR subsequently filed suit against Olyphant Borough seeking to compel issuance of its zoning permit rather than proceeding through the conditional-use process.

The Borough has opposed that position.

The Borough's position is especially noteworthy considering its own May 21 determination expressly described ERCOR's proposal as a **change in use** from the previously approved land development plan.

Residents are concerned that a project originally approved as warehouse/industrial development could become a massive data center campus with substantial electrical infrastructure without receiving the level of review that Olyphant's newly enacted data center ordinance requires.

WHAT OUR RIGHT-TO-KNOW REQUESTS HAVE REVEALED

We specifically asked Olyphant for records concerning what happened after the Zoning Officer determined that a data center was not a permitted use.

In its August 27, 2026 response, the Borough stated:

"After the Zoning Officers' decision that a data center was not a permitted use the Borough did not advance ERCOR Triboro's data center application."

The Borough also stated that no records exist in response to several categories of our request and directed us to the April 14 Council minutes for others.

Based on the records we now have, the timeline appears to be:

April 14: Council initially votes 4–3 in favor of the data center ordinance; a second vote results in a 3–4 defeat; Council then declares the ordinance substantively invalid because it does not provide for data centers and initiates a curative amendment.

April 22: ERCOR submits its data center zoning application.

April 23: Olyphant acknowledges receiving ERCOR's application for a "data center campus and related uses."

May 21: Zoning Officer concludes a data center is not provided for and is not materially similar to an existing listed use and identifies the special-exception process.

June: The April zoning dispute is resolved and the original April 14 data center ordinance is recognized as valid.

June 16: Shigo withdraws his May 21 determination and advises ERCOR that data centers are permitted in CM-2 subject to **conditional-use approval** and other required approvals.

ERCOR is now fighting the requirement that it go through that conditional-use process.

WHY I WANTED YOU TO KNOW ABOUT THIS

What is happening in Olyphant demonstrates why statewide protections are so important.

Our small municipalities are being forced to navigate extremely complicated zoning, land development, electrical infrastructure and environmental issues while facing sophisticated developers, attorneys and potentially enormous projects.

The public is then left trying to piece together what happened through meeting minutes, court filings and Right-to-Know requests.

Another thing worth knowing is that the ordinance can be amended between now and the court resolution. It's important that we gather community support in pressuring the council to add additional protections for the community into the conditional use ordinance. Particularly regarding setbacks, noise, environmental impacts, electrical infrastructure, water use, emergency services and cumulative impacts.

****Also keep in mind that this proposed data center development is especially important to us at L.C.O.P. because our cancer cluster investigation is centered in Olyphant. That is a much larger discussion for another day, but in short, we have obtained environmental records documenting serious contamination concerns in the area, including PFAS “forever chemicals” and other hazardous substances in soil and nearby waterways.**

One of our biggest concerns is that large-scale data center construction, excavation and site disturbance could potentially mobilize or redistribute contamination that is already present in the ground. **In our view, this land warranted far greater environmental scrutiny and potentially Superfund-level attention.** Unfortunately, based on the records we have reviewed, we believe the contamination was never fully reported to or addressed by the EPA in the way it should have been, and now a new facility was ultimately constructed right on top of the contaminated property.

For that reason, when we talk about data center development in Olyphant, we are not only concerned about noise, power demand, water use and infrastructure. We are also deeply concerned about what additional construction could mean for an area where there is already a documented history of environmental contamination and serious public-health concerns.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN ARCHBALD, PA

Archbald has a population of only about 7,500 residents, yet multiple data center campuses have been proposed there, along with major electrical infrastructure and a proposed natural-gas power facility. This is especially concerning because the **Lackawanna Energy Center**, a large natural-gas power plant in neighboring Jessup, is already only about **1 mile from Archbald**. In PennEnvironment's *Pennsylvania's Dirty Dozen* report, the Lackawanna Energy Center ranked **fourth among the state's largest greenhouse-gas polluters**, making the prospect of adding still more large-scale power generation and energy-intensive development in this same area especially troubling.

MULTIPLE PROJECTS ARE MOVING AT ONCE

According to the STOP Archbald Data Centers project tracker, the borough is dealing with several separate proposals, including **Wildcat Ridge, Archbald I, Green Mountain, Project Gravity, Archbald I North, Project Scott, Project Boson, and a proposed Essential Energy power facility**, along with major utility infrastructure. Some of these projects are proceeding under earlier zoning rules, while others are subject to Archbald's newer Data Center Overlay Ordinance.

That difference is significant because developers may argue that an earlier filing date or earlier zoning classification protects a project from later restrictions, while residents are trying to ensure that projects of this size undergo the strongest available review.

Wildcat Ridge has become one of the most heavily contested projects

The Wildcat Ridge proposal has been the subject of repeated conditional-use hearings before Archbald Borough Council.

Residents and experts have raised concerns about the applicant's noise modeling, generator operations, air emissions and whether the studies submitted by the developer accurately reflect what surrounding neighborhoods could actually experience.

According to information compiled by STOP Archbald Data Centers, questioning of the applicant's acoustic expert exposed issues including a reported **10-decibel error in the noise analysis**, questions about equipment calibration, the lack of a separate low-frequency noise analysis, and concerns over whether all relevant equipment had been included in the model.

The number of proposed emergency generators has also become a major issue. The project materials and hearing testimony have referenced **hundreds of generators**, with the count reportedly reaching nearly 600. Residents are concerned not only about routine testing, but also about how those generators could operate during grid emergencies or other extended events.

At later hearings, the Borough's own acoustic consultant reportedly projected substantial noise increases at nearby residences under certain generator-operating scenarios, adding to concerns that surrounding neighborhoods could experience significant noise impacts.

As of September 9th, Wildcat Ridge has completed its final conditional-use hearing, and Archbald Borough Council is now in the 45-day decision period. After months of expert testimony, public participation and disputes over noise, emissions, generators and other impacts, the ultimate decision on one of the largest proposed campuses now rests with a seven-member borough council. That alone illustrates the enormous responsibility Pennsylvania is placing on small municipal governments when projects of this scale arrive in their communities.

Please watch this video of Tamara Misewicz-Healy from that September 9th meeting. It's worth a watch! <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1ESaZAdrV/>

The **Valley View School District** has also become involved in the proceedings and was granted party status, allowing the district to participate formally in hearings and question witnesses.

That is particularly important because this is not simply an isolated industrial project. Residents are asking what the combined effect of these facilities could be on schools, children, neighborhoods and the broader Mid Valley area.

GAS-POWERED POWER FACILITY

One of the most important aspects of the Archbald situation is that the debate is no longer only about data center buildings.

A proposed **approximately 400-megawatt natural-gas generating facility associated with Project Boson** has also been presented in Archbald.

That demonstrates how quickly the data center issue becomes an energy-infrastructure issue as well.

According to testimony summarized by STOP Archbald Data Centers, major details concerning the proposed generating facility remained unresolved during hearings, including final equipment choices, aspects of the final site plan and some geotechnical questions involving historic mine workings.

The proposed facility was also described as a **major source** for purposes of federal air permitting, meaning that significant air-quality permitting requirements would apply. Residents have questioned whether the project is being evaluated too narrowly rather than together with the multiple data center campuses and other industrial sources proposed in the same area. **Remember, there is already a gas-powered power facility a mile away in Jessup, PA**

This is exactly why cumulative-impact analysis is so important.

A single data center may satisfy a noise standard.

A single generator bank may satisfy an air permit.

A single power plant may satisfy a state emissions standard.

A single transmission project may satisfy utility requirements.

But residents do not experience these projects one at a time. They experience all of them together.

ARCHBALD I WAS DENIED, NOW IN COURT

Another proposed data center, Archbald I, was denied by Borough Council in March 2026.

The developer subsequently challenged that denial and also asserted that the application should be considered approved because of alleged procedural issues under the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.

That dispute has moved into court, creating yet another layer of litigation for the municipality and residents to navigate.

There has also been litigation involving Archbald's Data Center Overlay Ordinance itself. Residents involved in that challenge have raised concerns about how the ordinance was developed and whether developer interests influenced the process. Those allegations remain part of an active legal dispute and should not be treated as established findings, but they demonstrate the level of distrust that has developed around the process.

THE ISSUE HAS RESHAPED ARCHBALD BOROUGH GOVERNMENT

The data center controversy has also caused major political upheaval inside Archbald.

In March 2026, Borough Council leadership was reorganized after council members argued that previous leadership had not adequately represented residents' interests regarding the proposed data center projects.

Subsequent resignations and appointments further changed the makeup of borough government, while residents continued attending hearings, obtaining party status, retaining experts, filing legal challenges and organizing through STOP Archbald Data Centers.

More recently, *the Wildcat Ridge developer has challenged the impartiality of Borough Council members and sought recusals of all members* based on statements and social-media activity. That raises another problem for small municipalities: elected officials are expected to respond to constituents, but when they later sit in a quasi-judicial role on a conditional-use application, developers may argue that their public comments demonstrate bias.

WHY ARCHBALD MATTERS STATEWIDE

I believe Archbald is one of the strongest examples of why Pennsylvania cannot leave the entire burden of hyperscale data center development to individual municipalities.

A small borough is being asked to evaluate multiple enormous data center campuses, hundreds of generators, major transmission infrastructure, a proposed natural-gas power facility, noise studies, air pollution, traffic, water use, geology, mine lands, emergency services and public-health concerns, while simultaneously defending zoning decisions in court.

The municipality and residents are effectively being forced to conduct the kind of regional infrastructure and environmental analysis that normally requires substantial technical expertise and financial resources.

The biggest unanswered question is not whether each individual project can technically meet one permit or one ordinance requirement.

It is: *What happens to the community if all these projects are built together?*

That is why residents continue to push for stronger protections involving **cumulative impacts, setbacks, noise, air emissions, water, power infrastructure, emergency services, public-health review and transparency regarding developers and end users.**

Archbald is no longer simply debating whether one data center should be approved. It has become a real-world example of what happens when an entire municipality is targeted for multiple hyperscale projects and the massive energy infrastructure that comes with them.

That is why statewide protections are so important, particularly protections that evaluate the **combined impacts of data centers, power plants, substations, transmission lines, generators, water demand and other associated infrastructure**, rather than treating every component as an isolated project.