Site Intelligence New Albany, Ohio

Siting posture, decision-makers and the approval pathway

Assessment: established market, site-specific execution risk

New Albany is a credible development location with an experienced municipal approval system. The city actively presents data centers as part of its economic strategy. That institutional support coexists with active neighborhood noise issues and detailed site-design requirements.

The best route is a parcel whose adopted zoning text already supports the intended use and physical design, with utility easements incorporated before the final development plan. The STACK Souder Road case demonstrates why those two workstreams need to be coordinated.

Dimension	Assessment	What drives it
Municipal posture	Supportive	Long-established data center development and an active economic-development position.
Entitlement	Parcel-specific	Adopted planned-district text, dimensional standards and final-plan conditions.
Community exposure	Active noise issue	City-reported Google and Meta complaints and mitigation work.
Power and layout	Material dependency	AEP easement caused a return to the Planning Commission in the STACK case.
Execution focus	Design before filing	Acoustics, access, stormwater and utility corridors need a coordinated layout.

Scope of this brief

City of New Albany, including its local planning and appeal bodies. The case study follows the approximately 16.8-acre STACK parcel north of New Albany Road East on Souder Road, parcel 222-005106. Recommendations are RegLayer analysis; the source register identifies the supporting decisions.

City data center resource

STACK case and approved minutes

Who makes the decisions

Authorities and named officials

Authority	Officials	Decision role
City Council	Mayor Sloan Spalding; Kasey Kist, president pro tempore; Marlene Brisk; Mike Durik; John McClelland; Matt Shull; Andrea Wiltrout.	Zoning legislation and relevant legislative approvals. Mayor chairs council and has no veto.
Planning Commission	Neil Kirby, chair; David Wallace, vice chair; Bruce Larsen, secretary; Sarah Briggs, BZA liaison; Dr. Taru Saigal; Andrea Wiltrout, council liaison.	Land-use review, legislative recommendations, final development plans and modifications.
Board of Zoning Appeals	Shaun LaJeunesse, chair; Abe Jacob, vice chair; Tiana Samuels, secretary; Sarah Briggs, PC liaison; Jeremiah Wood; Matt Shull, council liaison.	Administrative zoning appeals and variances under the applicable code route.
City administration	Joseph Stefanov, city manager. Community Development and city engineering staff.	Application coordination, technical review, conditions and permitting administration.

Meeting access

Council generally meets on the first and third Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. Planning Commission regular meetings are on the third Monday at 7 p.m.; informal meetings are generally on the first Monday. BZA generally meets on the fourth Monday at 6:30 p.m. Meetings are at Village Hall, 99 W. Main Street. The listed November 2 Planning Commission meeting is canceled.

Council and mayor roster

Planning Commission roster and meeting archive

BZA roster and meeting archive

Approval pathway

Local entitlement and parallel infrastructure work

Step	Decision / work product	Practical dependency
1. Parcel and zoning	Confirm city boundary, parcel IDs, adopted zoning text and prior approvals with planning staff.	A planned district may carry its own use, height and design rules.
2. Legislative route, if needed	Planning review and Council action on a required zoning change.	Test the actual program against the adopted text before choosing the application route.
3. Variance, if needed	Establish the competent reviewing body and decision for the requested relief.	The STACK history includes separate height relief ahead of its final plan.
4. Final development plan	Planning Commission reviews site arrangement and conditions.	Coordinate landscape, screening, access and utilities in the submitted design.
5. Engineering and permits	Close technical conditions; complete civil/building review and applicable inspections.	A favorable final-plan vote can still leave engineering comments open.
6. Later modifications	Bring layout changes through the required review.	STACK returned for an entrance and stormwater change caused by an AEP easement.

Parallel workstreams

Electric service and utility facilities require their own delivery plan. Applicable Ohio EPA air and water authorizations depend on generator equipment, discharge arrangements and site work. Transmission or generation facilities may introduce separate state proceedings. Commission approvals for utility service do not replace city land-use decisions.

Appeal route

The city public-notice archive records a Council appeal hearing after a Planning Commission final-development-plan denial under section 1159.12. That example is a separate site. It establishes an appeal branch worth checking against the written decision and applicable deadline.

Local pathway evidence and appeal notices

December STACK review packet

A decision trail in practice

STACK Souder Road: from approval to revised layout

The Planning Commission conditionally approved FDP-96-2025 on December 15, 2025. On April 6, 2026 it approved FDM-16-2026, 4-0, to move the entrance and stormwater basin for a new AEP easement. The approved minutes identify parcel 222-005106 and applicant Nicholas Ovens of EMH&T.; Engineering comments were to be addressed through permitting, subject to staff approval.

Development implication. Secure the easement geometry before freezing the campus plan. A utility corridor can affect the entry and drainage layout after the original entitlement decision, creating another commission step.

Approved April 6 minutes, pp. 2-3; staff report, pp. 15-17

Sentiment: supportive government, real neighbor friction

The city reports noise complaints at Google and Meta. Google's latest update targets a permanent solution in December 2026. Meta is reconstructing a temporary wall removed near completion and adjusting fan operations. These are specific operational issues, rather than evidence of blanket local opposition.

RegLayer assessment. An applicant should arrive with a credible acoustic design and commissioning plan. A site near residences will attract scrutiny even in a market that welcomes the investment. Interim construction measures should remain in place until permanent mitigation performs.

City noise updates

Priority diligence for a new site

Work product	Decision it supports
Parcel entitlement pack	Adopted zoning text, prior variances, final plan, conditions and amendment history.
Utility-layout overlay	Service corridor, substation, access and drainage geometry before final design.
Acoustic and commissioning plan	Operating scenarios, fan startup, emergency testing and temporary protection.
Approval and condition register	Named authority, case ID, action date, open condition, owner and next milestone.