

How to Know if a Developer is Class A, Community-First

Every community deserves to know what to ask of any developer coming to their table. This checklist helps you understand what type of developer you're working with and what standards to hold them to.

Know Your Developer

Not all data center developers are the same. Before evaluating a project, understand what kind of developer is at your table.

Land Flipper

Acquires land, entitlements and power access not to build, but to sell at a profit. Most have never built or operated a data center. The partner you negotiate with may never build anything, and the company that eventually develops in your community is one you never met.

Short-Term Developer

Whether building on speculative demand or planning a sale in a few years, the incentive is the same: minimize investment, maximize return and move on. Often the developer has no proven track record of long-term operations. Like remodeling a home you plan to flip rather than live in, every decision looks different when you don't plan to stay. The grid gets strained rather than strengthened, demand may never materialize, and communities can be left with a facility that gets sold or abandoned.

Class A, Community-First Developer

Shows up as a genuine resource: a responsible environmental steward, a creator of real and lasting economic opportunity and a long-term partner with a track record to back it up. Backed by institutional capital and built around creditworthy customers running mission-critical workloads, they build to own and operate for the long-term.



ASK:

- ☐ *Have you ever completed a data center project from groundbreaking to operations?*
- ☐ *Do you plan to develop, operate and hold this site yourself, or do you plan to resell it?*
- ☐ *Have you ever acquired a site and sold it to another developer before breaking ground?*

- ☐ *Can you demonstrate the financial backing to sustain this development long-term?*
- ☐ *How many facilities have you owned and operated for more than five years?*
- ☐ *What investments have you made to strengthen the grid?*
- ☐ *Can you provide references from communities you have worked with?*

- ☐ *Who are your financial backers?*
- ☐ *Which communities have you been a long-term partner in, and can you provide local references?*
- ☐ *What does partnership look like in the communities you call home, five or ten years in?*



COMMUNITY



GOOD NEIGHBOR



WORKFORCE



SUSTAINABILITY



Data Center Developer Community Checklist

Hold any developer, including us, to these standards.



THE CHECKLIST

A Class A developer earns a check on every line.
Bring it to your next developer meeting and planning commission.

	Class A, Community-First Developer	Short-Term Developer	Land Flipper
Grid, Water & Environment			
Full developer funding for grid and transmission upgrades; no cost to ratepayers	✓	⦿	—
Zero net water consumption for cooling; water-positive stormwater management after development	✓	⦿	—
Commits to lessen strain on the grid during stress, so homes don't lose life-saving power	✓	⦿	—
Cleaner, more sustainable operations – clean-burning HVO biofuel backup, low-carbon construction	✓	—	—
Community & Construction			
Binding community commitments before construction begins, not contingent on incentives, lasting the life of the project	✓	⦿	⦿
Verifiable construction standards: safe job sites, noise controls, lighting plans, setbacks by design	✓	⦿	—
Demonstrated responsiveness to community feedback, not just during permitting	✓	—	—
Focus on minimizing construction-phase disruption	✓	⦿	—
Designed to evolve with time, not built to a fixed spec that dates with the technology	✓	—	—
Workforce & Local Economy			
Local labor commitments for construction	✓	⦿	—
Active workforce development with direct career pathways into operations roles	✓	—	—
Competitive operations wages, often above local averages	✓	⦿	—
Long-lasting tax base contribution to schools, roads and public services	✓	⦿	—
Capital & Durability			
Long-term institutional capital backing; not speculative or short-horizon funds	✓	—	—
Buildings designed to be upgraded for decades	✓	—	—
Community commitments structured to be binding and durable	✓	⦿	⦿
Creditworthy customers running mission-critical workloads, not speculative AI demand	✓	⦿	—
Independent Verification			
Third-party certifications spanning construction, sustainability and water use	✓	—	—
Third-party recognition from organizations outside the data center industry	✓	—	—

✓ Meets the standard ⦿ Partially meets – limited circumstances, active ownership only or to minimum code — Does not meet