



UNAUTOMATED
THE HUMAN INTELLIGENCE PROJECT

PRACTICAL GUIDE 006B

TEN QUESTIONS EVERY COMMUNITY SHOULD ASK

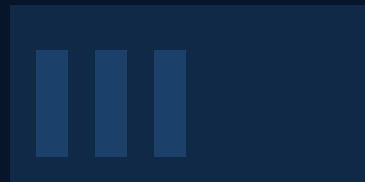
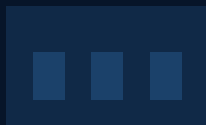
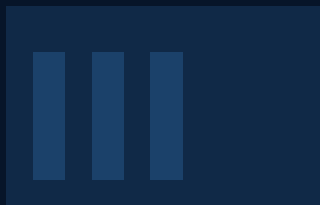
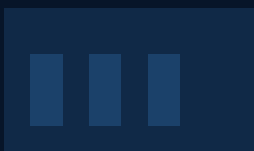
Before Approving a Data Center Development Project

THE HUMAN QUESTION

Does this project serve the people and place that will live with its consequences?

FIRST EDITION | AUGUST 2026

UNAUTOMATED.ORG



Ten Questions Every Community Should Ask

Bring these questions to the first meeting, not the last. The purpose is to reveal the complete project, the hardest conditions, the ownership of risk, and the strength of accountability.

1

What is the complete project?

Ask for the full campus, all planned phases, substations, transmission lines, generators, batteries, water and wastewater facilities, roads, and likely expansion. A small first phase should not hide the impact of the intended buildout.

2

What will it use on the hardest day?

Annual averages can conceal the day that matters most. Request maximum electric demand, peak water withdrawal and consumption, generator operation, cooling demand, and emergency conditions during heat, drought, grid stress, or equipment failure.

3

Where will the water come from, and what happens when it is scarce?

Distinguish potable, groundwater, surface water, reclaimed water, and recycled process water. Ask who else depends on the source and what mandatory response begins during drought or shortage.

4

Why was this cooling design selected?

Require a comparison of air cooling, evaporative cooling, direct liquid cooling, closed loop systems, hybrid approaches, water reuse, and heat recovery. The least expensive design for the developer is not automatically the best design for the community.

5

What electrical infrastructure is required, and who carries the risk?

Identify substations, transmission, generation, storage, service schedule, and the party responsible for costs if the facility expands slowly, uses less power than forecast, closes, or leaves specialized utility investments behind.

Ten Questions, continued

6

What will nearby people hear?

Study continuous mechanical sound, tonal and low frequency sound, vibration, generator testing, emergency operation, and cumulative noise. Require preconstruction modeling, postconstruction testing, complaint response, and correction.

7

What are the air quality and emergency response obligations?

Review backup engines, turbines, onsite generation, batteries, fuel storage, fire planning, hazardous materials, shelter or evacuation procedures, responder training, water supply, air monitoring, and runoff control.

8

What public value remains after construction?

Separate temporary construction activity from permanent employment and lasting public benefit. Examine taxes after incentives, public service costs, workforce opportunities, infrastructure improvements, environmental protection, and community commitments.

9

Which promises are binding and visible?

Convert important claims into written conditions, agreements, permits, reporting duties, performance limits, inspection rights, correction deadlines, and enforceable remedies. A presentation is not a protection.

10

What happens when the project changes or ends?

Require review of material expansions, ownership changes, cooling conversions, new power systems, and new phases. Establish decommissioning, equipment removal, site restoration, financial security, and continuing obligations.

THE QUESTION BEHIND ALL TEN

Are we approving yesterday's data center assumptions, or requiring the best reasonably available and site appropriate design for the community that will host it?