DATA CENTRE FEASIBILITY STUDY

JULY 2025

ballad

ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE
Where Adventure Begins!

Acknowledgements

The Data Centre Feasibility Study was prepared for The Town of Rocky Mountain House. Research and reporting for the project was conducted by Ballad Group.

The Town of Rocky Mountain House and Ballad would like to thank the industry stakeholders and government partners who collaborated with us to ensure project success. This report assesses the Town's capacity to support the operational needs of data centres. It aims to identify the community's strengths that align with industry requirements, as well as any challenges that must be addressed to successfully attract and accommodate data centre investment.

A special thank you to our project steering committee members for collaborating and supporting our team throughout the project period:

- Jeff Hartling, Economic Development Officer, The Town of Rocky Mountain House
- Dean Schweder, Director of Planning and Community Development, The Town of Rocky Mountain House

Executive Summary

The Town of Rocky Mountain House commissioned this Data Centre Feasibility Study to evaluate its alignment with industry investment requirements and determine its attractiveness as a viable location for a data centre facility. With increasing global demand for digital infrastructure and the provincial mandates and initiatives to attract data centres, municipal leadership sought to understand whether the Town could be a competitive location for data centre investment.

The study included a comprehensive review to assess the Town's capacity to service the industry's operational needs and assessing the industry's market environment. Key tasks included:

- Understanding the current industry's market and growth potential.
- Determining the industry's key operational requirements for both small capacity and large-scale data centres.
- Identifying key legislation requirements.
- Reviewing land availability in both the Town and surrounding areas in Clearwater County.
- Engaging with utility and broadband carriers to assess technical readiness and future capacity.

Key findings included:

- The global data centre industry is experiencing strong growth, with a significant presence across North America.
- Operational requirements vary significantly between small and large-scale data centres.
- Several provincial and federal partners can support data centre attraction.
- The Town's zoning, policies, and strategies are complimentary to industry attraction.
- Current infrastructure and business conditions align well with the needs of small-capacity data centres.

The study concluded that the Town is well-positioned to support small-capacity data centre development, given its infrastructure, land availability, and policy environment. However, large-scale facilities are not currently feasible due to their high operational demands.

To strengthen investment readiness, the study recommends the Town prepare a tailored investment package, enhance collaboration with relevant partners, and proactively plan for future land and utility infrastructure expansion to support long-term growth in the industry.

With focused strategic action, the Town of Rocky Mountain House can position itself as a promising and emerging location for data centre investment in the province.

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1 Overview of Study

To determine whether the Town of Rocky Mountain House could feasibly attract data centres, an evaluation was conducted to assess its business and investment capacity in relation to the operational requirements of the data centre industry. This involved a two-part approach: first, analyzing the data centre industry to define its market dynamics and operational needs; and second, evaluating the Town's ability to meet those needs through a review of local assets, infrastructure, and policy conditions. The process was structured as follows:

1. Assess the Data Centre Industry Environment

This step established a foundational understanding of the industry's operational context and growth potential to create an informed benchmark for evaluating the Town's capacity. It included:

- **Market Analysis:** Reviewed current industry trends and market growth projections to determine whether the industry is expanding or contracting.
- **Operational Requirements:** Identified key operational requirements of data centres through interviews with industry executives and stakeholders.
- **Business Attraction Partners:** Identified relevant provincial and federal organizations that can support investment attraction.
- **Incentive Programs:** Reviewed business grants available to data centres at both the provincial and federal levels.
- **Target Companies:** Profiled leading global companies operating in the data centre space to help the Town identify high-potential investment prospects.

2. Assess the Town's Investment Capacity

This phase measured how well the Town's assets, policies, and infrastructure align with the specific needs of the data centre industry. It included:

- **Municipal Policy Review:** Analyzed municipal strategies and policies to assess alignment with data centre attraction and identify potential barriers.
- **Legislative Context:** Outlined key relevant industry legislation that could influence data centre development.
- **Workforce Availability:** Examined regional workforce characteristics, including talent supply relevant to the data centre industry.
- **Industrial Land and Servicing:** Conducted a comprehensive assessment of available industrial land, servicing capacity, and suitability for data centre development.
- **Utility Infrastructure:** Evaluated critical utilities, including electrical capacity, fiber/data connectivity, and water availability.

The findings of the two-part assessment were synthesized into a feasibility summary and strategic recommendations that:

- Evaluated the Town's current ability to support data centre operations.
- Identified the type(s) of data centres best suited to the region.
- Highlighted areas requiring further development or support to enhance readiness.
- Recommended strategic initiatives to help the Town position itself as a viable and competitive location for data centre investment.

2 Data Centre Environment

2.1 Industry Assessment

2.1.1 Introduction

The data centre industry in Canada is a rapidly expanding sector that underpins the country's digital economy by providing the physical infrastructure necessary to store, process, and manage data. These digital services make up critical components for the core operations of multiple industries from telecommunications and financial services to healthcare and e-commerce. Data centres are highly specialized facilities that are tailored to provide specific services and can be classified into four main categories[1].

The first are hyper scale facilities which are generally the largest out of the four. They are designed to handle vast amounts of data for intensive computing tasks which require a high level of efficiency with the ability to rapidly upscale service if required. Hyper scale facilities differ from traditional data centres by virtue of their massive size, and implementation of multiple redundances that reduce down-time from the disruption of utility services or maintenance.

The second main type of data centres are AI cloud service and graphic processing unit (GPU) focused facilities. These data centres are similar to hyperscale facilities in terms of their size, but they have a greater degree of hardware specialization with larger power requirements to maximize their efficiency for specific tasks. This makes GPU focused facilities the most economic choice for operators of artificial intelligence services or large language models. The capital-intensive nature of these facilities typically means that they will be operated by large, international corporations such as Amazon Web Services (AWS), Microsoft Azure, and Google for cloud services.

Colocation facilities are the third general category of data centre. They are designed to be smaller and more economical than the previous two categories, with a focus on renting data centre capacity to retail customers. Typically, the operators of these facilities will act as an independent third party who manages the infrastructure necessary for another business to provide digital services to its customers. This enables companies to deliver a wide array of offerings to customers across a large geographic area with minimum cost and complexity.

Enterprise facilities make up the fourth major category of data centre. They can vary in size based upon the type of industry they are servicing and are specifically developed for the purpose of managing data and digital services of the business who is operating them. They are targeted at large companies in industries that have specific and predictable requirements. Good examples of this type of facility include data centres for banks and government organizations who deal with highly sensitive and predictable data, which must be retained for long periods of time to comply with audits and financial reporting standards.

While each type of data centre has its own unique operational requirements based upon its size and type of specialization, there are some key requirements for new facility development which are applicable across the industry. Access to a large and stable source of power is the leading consideration for organizations who are assessing the potential of a new location

[1] Record growth continues in data centre sector: C&W. Real Estate News EXchange, September 18, 2024

for data centre development. These facilities draw a large amount of power from the grid, and the local utility infrastructure will require the capacity to meet this need while also leaving room for future expansion as the facility grows. Water is another important utility that will be required for data centre development as the majority of facilities use evaporative cooling to manage the excess heat generated by their data processing equipment. The amount of water required is beyond what can be sourced from wells and cisterns, so easy connection to the water distribution network of a local municipality is important. Access to a high-capacity internet connection at the proposed site is another major consideration for potential development due to the large amount of data that will be transferred during the regular operations of the data centre. Locations with limited capacity in their network infrastructure will become a bottleneck, which prevents data centre customers from fully utilizing the processing power of the facility. To mitigate this issue, companies in the industry typically locate their facilities near their target market in major urban areas with well-developed supporting infrastructure. With more industries relying on digital services as an integral component of their operations, the demand for dependable, secure, and sustainable data infrastructure is only projected to increase.

2.1.2 Current Market Assessment

The current state of the data centre industry is one of rapid growth driven by the widespread adoption of emerging technologies, coupled with the expansion of digital services and data gathering operations across multiple industries. The majority of data centre development has occurred around major metropolitan centres within the United States, Western Europe, and China as demonstrated in Figure 1.[2] These locations have attracted significant industry investment because of their highly developed supporting infrastructure for electricity, water, and fiberoptic internet services. Concentrating development around these large urban centres also places data centre operators in close proximity to large concentrations of their customers, reducing network latency and mitigating the effect of bottlenecks due to constraints in network infrastructure. These locations also have a greater availability of information technology (I.T.) professionals to draw upon when recruiting new employees or outsourcing components of business operations to third party contractors.

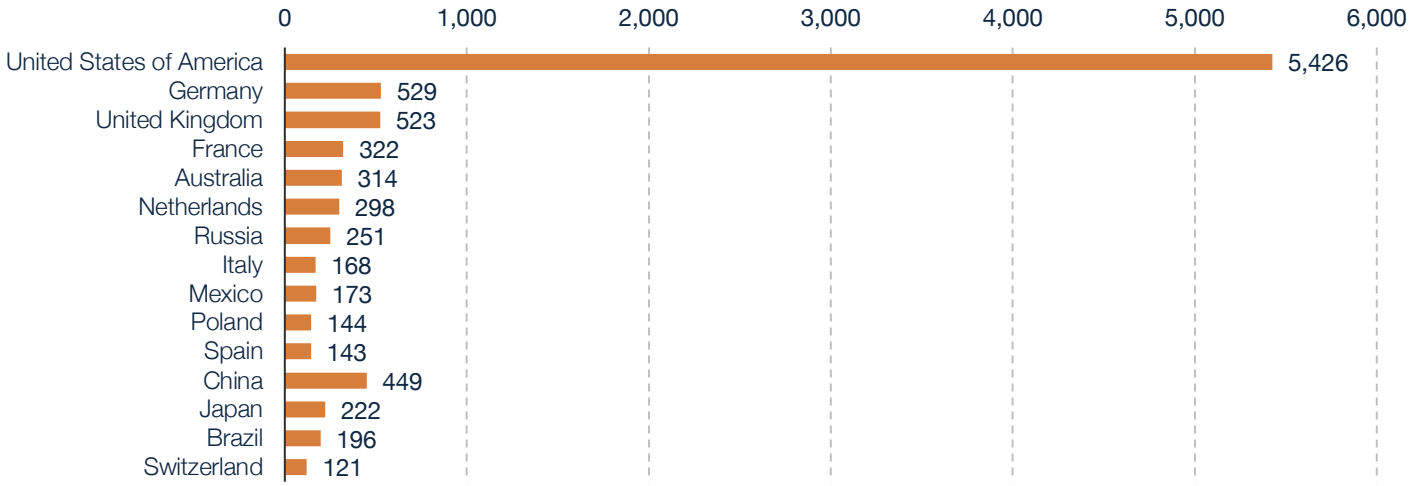

Figure 1: Leading Countries by Number of Data Centres as of March 2025

[2] Leading countries by number of data centres as of March 2025. Cloudscene (2025), as cited in Statista Data Centre Market Report (2025).

Over the past five years demand for all types of data centres has seen a significant increase spurred on by the popularization of cloud computing and new artificial intelligence models. As large language models such as Chat GPT and Microsoft Copilot have expanded in size and capacity, the computational and energy resources required for their training has also expanded. The International Energy Agency estimates that global energy consumption for data centres and their associated transmission infrastructure accounted for 450 Terawatt hours or 1.7% of annual global electricity demand in 2022.[3] Current trends indicate that this level of consumption is likely to increase substantially, with the total supply of global data centre capacity in gigawatts of electricity consumed growing from 33 gigawatts at the end of 2020, to 57 gigawatts by the end of 2024 as shown in Figure 2.[4] This industry trend of rapid growth is projected to continue, reaching more than 89 gigawatts by the end of 2027. Assessing industry trends in terms of gigawatts (GW) of power consumed helps to provide a general overview of the total size of operations since electricity is the primary input required to run data centres of any type.

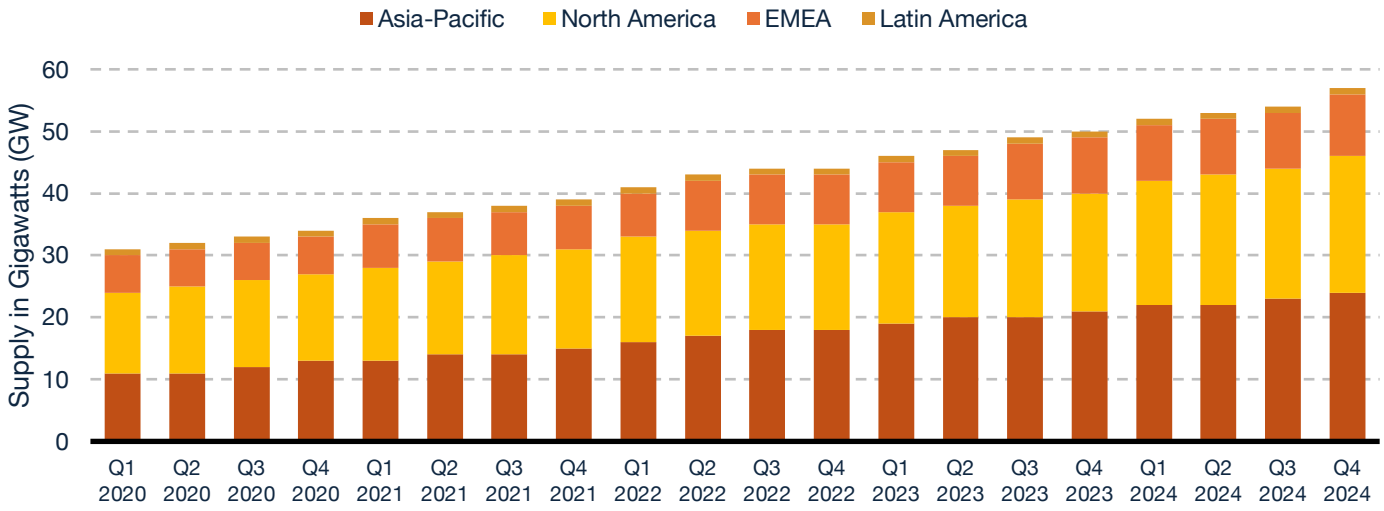

Figure 2: Data Centre Supply Worldwide 2020-2024

In Canada specifically, this trend has been reflected in a high compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of revenue for the data processing and hosting service industry, which increased at 8.6% per year in the five-year period between the beginning of 2020 and the end of 2024.[5] Rapid and continuous growth in the Canadian market has been enabled by a business environment which is conducive to large scale data centre development and operations. This includes stable and reliable electrical grid infrastructure with a relatively low cost for power generation to reduce operating costs and decrease the risks associated with loss of service. A robust regulatory framework with clear data privacy restrictions through the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA) also reduces uncertainty for organizations looking to base data centre operations in Canada while offering digital services to international customers. This has become an increasingly important consideration in light of the recent fines imposed by the European Union on Google and

[3] Data Centres and Data Transmission Networks. International Energy Agency, July 2023.
[4] Data centre supply worldwide from 2020-2024 by region. 451Research; Goldman Sachs (2025), as cited in Statista Data Centre Market Report (2025).
[5] Data Processing & Hosting services in Canada. IBIS World, October 2024

Microsoft for alleged anti-competitive practices and breaches in consumer data privacy. The availability of skilled information technology professionals represents another positive factor in Canada's business environment that encourages data centre development. Having an existing base of experienced I.T. professionals in conjunction with well developed post-secondary education programs increases the pool of potential candidates and improves access to the labour market for data centre operators.

The performance of Canadas data centre industry has generally followed global market trends, with some key differences due to the countries unique business environment and consumer demands. Outsourcing of data management and hosting services has grown among Canadian clients with small to medium sized business who have become increasingly reliant on digital services to conduct their operations. These companies may not have the financial capital or skilled labour required for in-house data facilities, and outsourcing these services will allow for them to rapidly scale operations to meet consumer demand. International data hosting has also risen in popularity due to the availability of skilled I.T. labour and relatively low cost of electricity in Canada.

There is a larger concentration of data storage and management services offered by Canadian data centres when compared to their international competitors, accounting for 28.4% of revenue from all digital services provided as displayed in Figure 3 [6]. This is substantially more than the corresponding 3.9% of the data storage and management service segment in the United States' data centre market.[7] Business Process management and website hosting still make up the largest service segment for the industry in the Canadian market.

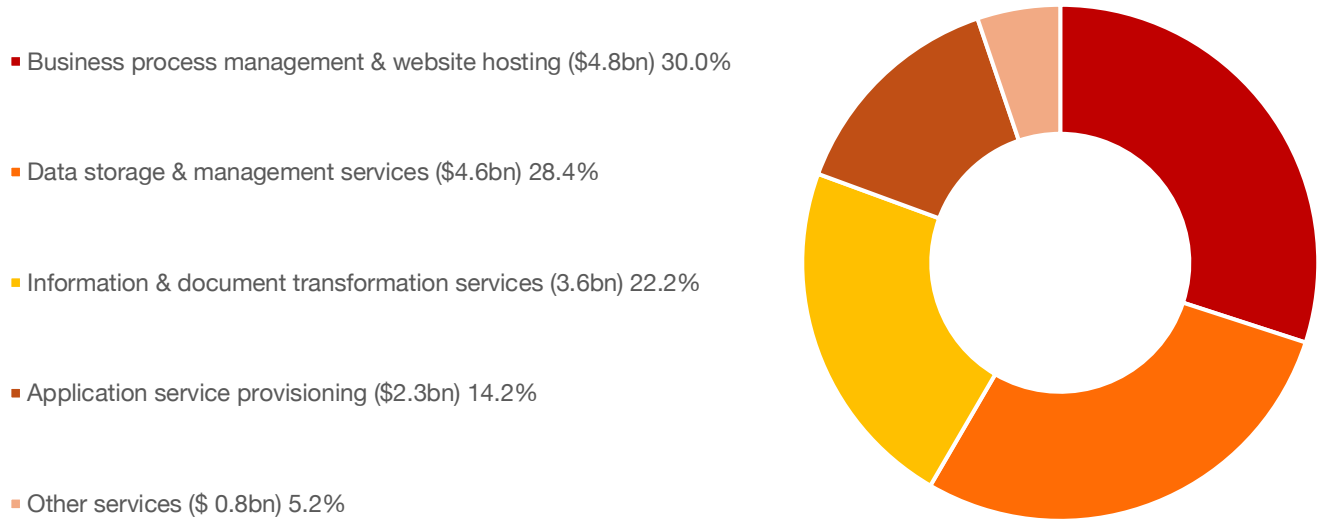

Figure 3: Data Processing & Hosting Services Segmentation in the Canadian Market

[6] Data Processing & Hosting services in Canada. IBIS World, October 2024
[7] Data Processing & Hosting services in the U.S. IBIS World, May 2025

These data services are provided by facilities that are predominantly concentrated around large municipalities in Ontario and Quebec, which together comprise 64.6% of the total data centre market share in Canada. More recently, the industry has seen significant growth in the provinces of British Columbia and Alberta, which account for 18.5% and 9.9% of the national market respectively.[8] The Canadian Energy Regulator recognises a total of 239 data centre facilities operating across the country as of 2024 show in Figure 4 and Table 1.[9] Another 38 data centres projects are currently under construction with estimated completion in 2025

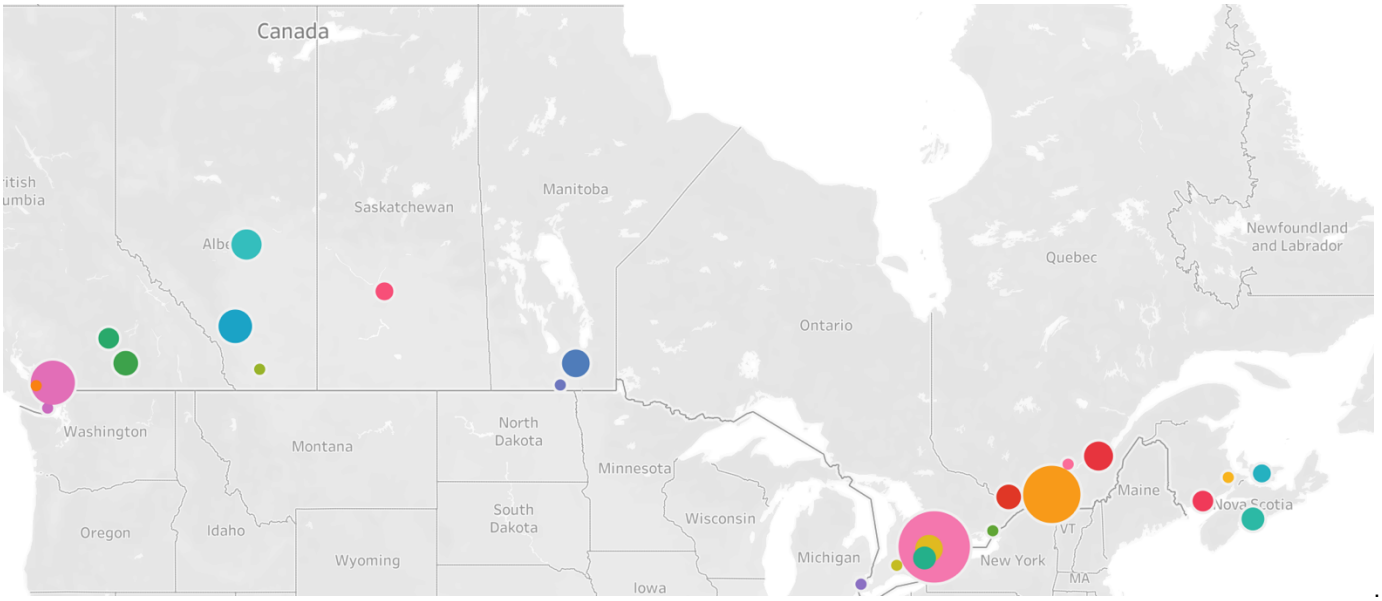

Figure 4: Canadian Energy Regulator Map of Data Centres Operating in Canada

Data Centre Location	Number of Data Centres	Data Centre Location	Number of Data Centres
Toronto	86	Regian	3
Montreal	58	Hamilton	3
Vancouver	29	Saint John	3
Calgary	16	Charlottetown	2
Edmonton	15	Prince George	2
Quebec	10	Moncton	1
Winnipeg	9	Lethbridge	1
Mississauga	8	Windsor	1
Ottawa	5	Oakville	1
Halifax	5	London	1
Saskatoon	4	Victoria	1
Waterloo	4	Kingston	1
Kelowna	4	Nanaimo	1
Kamloops	3	Shawinigan	1

Table 1: Canadian Energy Regulator Table of Municipal Data Centres Locations

[8] Data Processing & Hosting services in Canada. IBIS World, October 2024

[9] Market Snapshot: Energy demand from data centres is steadily increasing, and AI development is a significant factor. Canada Energy Regulator, October 2024

The total number of professionals employed by these data centres and their supporting services accounts for more than 41,700 jobs in the Canadian economy as of 2024. This demonstrates a significant growth in the industry employment figures from 2019, which stood at approximately 28,900 representing a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.6% over a five-year period expressed in Figure 5.[10] Recent trends and future projections indicate that this rapid growth in employment is slowing, but will likely remain at a consistent rate between 3% and 4% annually.

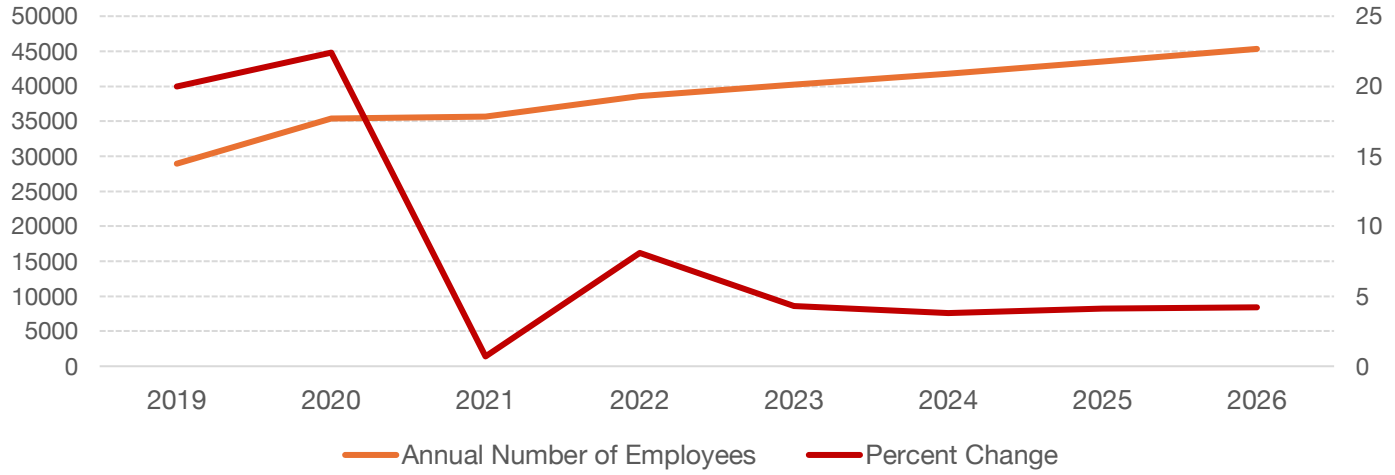

Figure 5: Total Number of Employees & Percent Change for Data Processing & Hosting Services in Canada

The state of the current data centre industry is stable and conducive to further development. With large and repeated investments made for construction of new facilities by major industry players, investor confidence is high, and consumers are enthusiastic about the possibilities associated with the adoption of new technologies. While the rapid advancement in industry development that was seen since 2019 has started to slow as corner stone technologies such as artificial intelligence begin to mature, there is still a significant opportunity for steady growth over the foreseeable future. The Canadian business environment is particularly well positioned to take advantage of this growth potential with reliable supporting infrastructure, relatively inexpensive energy costs, and a labour pool of skilled I.T. professionals that can contribute to the development of the data centre industry.

Key Insights:

- The worldwide data centre industry is still in a phase of rapid growth. The total supply of global data centre capacity grew from 33 gigawatts at the end of 2020, to 57 gigawatts by the end of 2024.
- Large amounts of electricity consumption by data centres are placing an increasingly high demand on local energy infrastructure, raising concerns over the economic costs of data centre operation.

[10] Data Processing & Hosting services in Canada. IBIS World, October 2024

2.1.3 Future Growth and Market Trends

The global data centre industry is projected to continue its rapid growth over the next five years as A.I. becomes more prevalent, and companies invest in cloud technologies which require processing and storage for vast amounts of data.

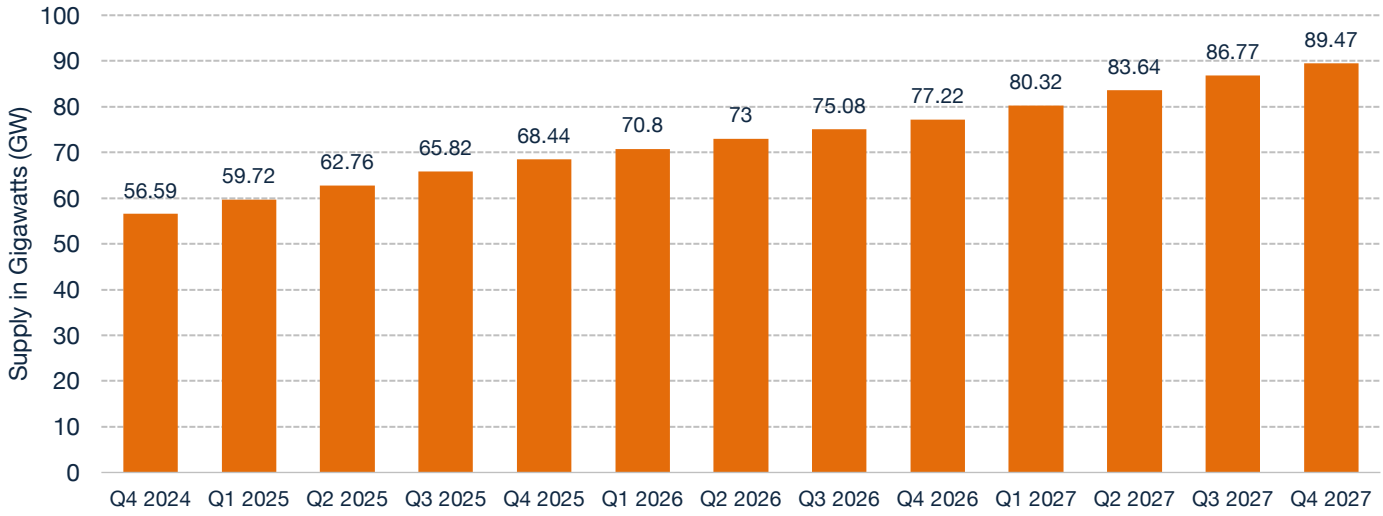

Figure 6: Data Centre Supply Worldwide Forecast from 2024-2027

Increasing consumer demand for digital services has also led to larger data storage and network capacity requirements that necessitate significant investments in new data centre infrastructure. Accurately measuring the current and forecasted supply of data centre capacity can be difficult due to the highly specialized nature of certain types of facilities, and the different metrics they use for performance indicators. Assessing industry trends in terms of gigawatts (GW) of power consumed helps to provide a general overview of the total size of operations since electricity is the primary input required to run data centres of any type. The total supply of worldwide data centre capacity was recorded to be at 56.6 gigawatts as of the last quarter of 2024, which was a significant increase from the worldwide capacity of 30.5 GW at the beginning of 2020. This trend is expected to continue for the foreseeable future, with industry forecasts showing rapid growth until at least the end of 2027 as displayed in Figure 6.[11]

Given the rapidly increasing energy requirements of the industry and high cost of power generation in many regions, the capacity of electrical grids in major data centre markets has become a serious concern for corporations undertaking facility development. This has resulted in the prioritization of new development in areas with relatively low cost of power generation, and the construction of data centres with high levels of energy efficiency. The efficiency of these facilities is measured by the industry through its Power Usage Effectiveness (PUE), which is a ratio that indicates how much of the total power consumption of a facility is used for its computational needs. A PUE of one would imply that the facility is perfectly efficient, while a PUE of two would mean that half of the power is required to run supporting systems such as cooling, lighting, and security. Globally, the average annual Power Usage Effectiveness (PUE) for data centres has

[11] Data centre supply worldwide forecast from 4th quarter 2024 to 4th quarter 2027. Goldman Sachs (2025), as cited in Statista Data Centre Market Report (2025).

stabilized at approximately 1.56 since 2018 due to advancements in more efficient A.I. models and improvements in industrial cooling systems.[12] Carbon neutral facilities which utilize renewable sources of power generation to meet their increasing energy needs are another method of energy management that has recently become a long-term strategic goal for many of the industry's major competitors. Google and Microsoft have announced 2030 targets, and Iron Mountain a 2040 target, to source and match zero-carbon electricity on a 24/7 basis within each grid where demand is located.[13]

Despite concerns about electrical grid capacity and environmental sustainability, global revenue generation by the data centre industry has increased substantially since 2022. Future market projections from Statista's 2025 Data Centre Market Report indicates that this trend will continue for at least the next five years as development attempts to catch up with consumer demand shown in Figure 7[14]. The United States and China are projected to continue leading this new growth in the data centre industry over the next five years due to their well-established supporting infrastructure, availability of capital for financially intensive projects, and large consumer markets with relatively high levels of geographic density.

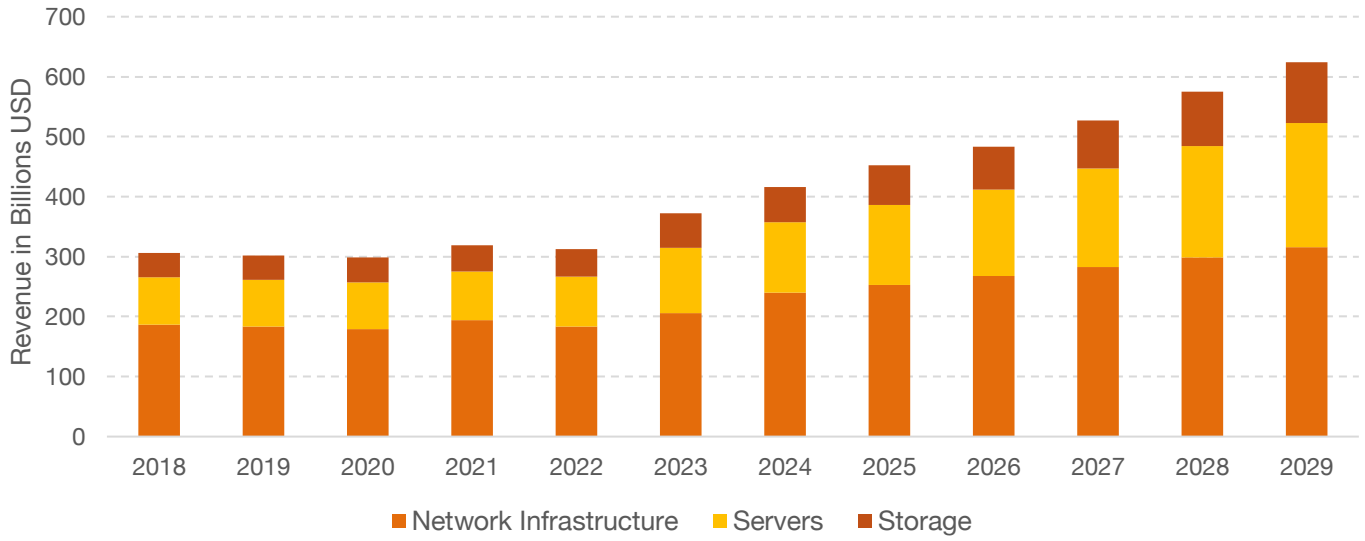

Figure 7: Worldwide Revenue for the Data Centre Market 2018- 2029

The Canadian data centre industry is projected to see more moderate market growth and new facility development when compared to that of the global industry average. Projected growth in the Canadian market is still positive, but will be hampered by the capacity of existing infrastructure for power delivery, and relatively long component lead times that constrains the development of new facilities. The innovative technologies that were driving the initial rapid market expansion such as Large Language Models (LLMs) for artificial intelligence, and cloud computing services have also begun

[12] Data centre average annual Power Usage Effectiveness (PUE) worldwide from 2007 to 2024. Uptime Institute (2024), as cited in Statista Data Centre Market Report (2025).
[13] Data Centres and Data Transmission Networks. International Energy Agency, July 2023.
[14] Revenue in the data centre Market for different Segments Worldwide from 2018-2029. Statista Data Centre Market Report (2025).

reaching more mature stages in their product life cycle.[15] This will naturally result in slow down of development as market share is solidified among key industry players and high-risk speculative investments are reduced. The annual percent change of revenue for data processing and hosting services in Canada is set to slow from a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 8.6% over a five year period between 2019 and 2024, to a CAGR of 1.5% over the five year period between 2024 and 2029 show in Error! Reference source not found..[16]

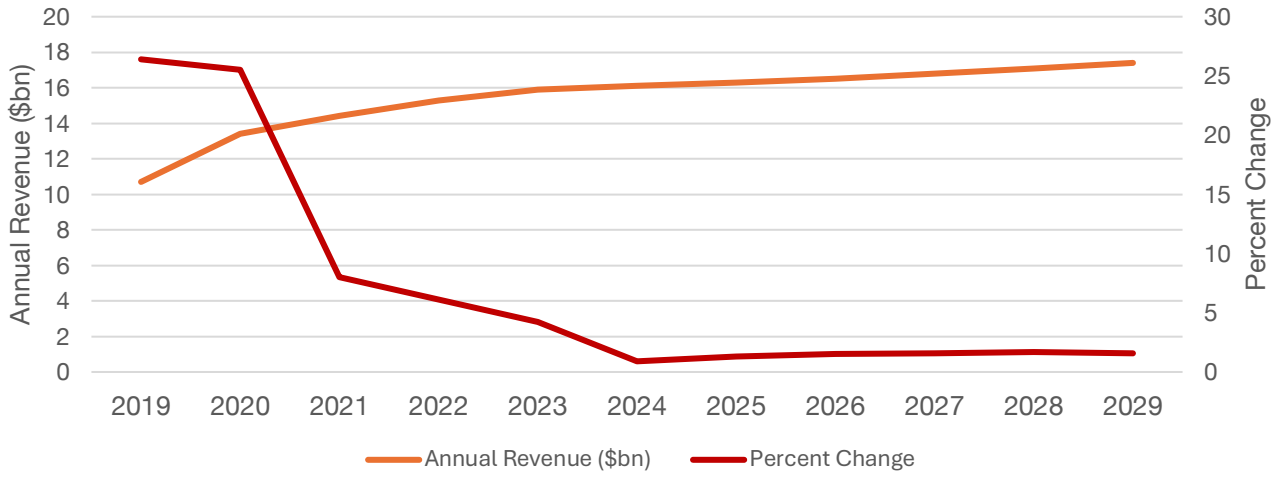

Figure 8: Total Annual Revenue & Percent Change for Data Processing & Hosting Services in Canada

A reduction in the forecasted growth for the Canadian data centre industry can partially be attributed to rising interest rates which makes financing large, capital-intensive projects with a long period for return on investment less attractive for investors. As Michael Borron, associate vice-president of Cushman & Wakefield, told the Real Estate News Exchange in an interview regarding their Americas Data Centre H1 2024 Update industry report, "We definitely saw a decline in speculative data centre investment, especially since (interest) rates started to increase."[17] A significant factor inhibiting greater development is that finding the right sites for data centres is often more challenging in Canada than the United States, according to Borron. He cited higher land costs, longer entitlement processes, environmental approvals and geography as key reasons why. The result has been a speculative investment perspective in the Canadian market even though demand remains high, with the vacancy rate for existing facilities falling to three per cent in the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec as capacity outstrips supply. Most of the recent capacity that has been developed in Canada was delivered by hyperscale facilities for cloud expansion as well as for the computation and storage of AI models. "A lot of the cloud growth that we're seeing now is to provide cloud services to the local population," Borron explained, "Where there's a little bit more flexibility on where to locate is on the AI and GPU side." He noted that, "They don't necessarily need to be in one market or another. Those users are moving towards power availability and low-cost power buckets."

[15] Market Snapshot: Energy demand from data centres is steadily increasing, and AI development is a significant factor. Canada Energy Regulator, October 2024

[16] Data Processing & Hosting services in Canada. IBIS World, October 2024

[17] Record growth continues in data centre sector: C&W. Real Estate News EXchange, September 18, 2024

Given the importance of energy costs and operational efficiency on success in the industry, Canadian data centres are increasingly adopting advanced waste heat recovery and cooling technologies to improve energy efficiency and reduce environmental impacts. For example, at the QScale Q01 data centre in Levis, Quebec, nearly 100 MW of energy from waste heat is expected to be redirected to households by the end of 2024.[18] Pioneering these type of efficiency gains will be vital for Canadian industry to remaining competitive on the global data processing & hosting services market. Local municipalities and utilities operators in Quebec are also factoring data centre electricity usage into their long-term strategic decision, making them one of the largest providers for power in the country. Hydro Québec anticipates an increase of 4.1 TWh in electricity demanded by data centres from 2023 to 2032.

Key Insight:

- The global data centre industry is projected to continue its rapid growth over the next five years as A.I. becomes more prevalent, and companies invest in cloud technologies.
- The global industry trend of rapid expansion is expected to continue for the foreseeable future, with industry forecasts showing high growth forecasts until at least the end of 2027.
- Forecasted growth for the Canadian data centre industry is lower than the global average. This can be attributed to rising interest rates, higher land costs, longer entitlement processes, and environmental approvals.
- Carbon neutral facilities which utilize renewable sources of power generation to meet their increasing energy needs are another method of energy management that has recently become a long-term strategic goal for many of the industry's major competitors.

[18] Market Snapshot: Energy demand from data centres is steadily increasing, and AI development is a significant factor. Canada Energy Regulator, October 2024

2.2 Industry Operational Requirements

To gain direct insights into the operational requirements of data centres, we conducted interviews with senior executives from two distinct types of data centre companies. The first was the Operating Director of North America for Digital Realty, a global leader with approximately 250 data centres across 25 countries. Digital Realty develops large-scale facilities for major clients such as Google and Microsoft (Azure), typically based on long-term lease models. The second was the Senior Vice President of Operations at eStruxture, a Canadian firm with 16 data centres nationwide, including three in Alberta. eStruxture specializes in smaller capacity data centres serving smaller corporate clients.

These executives emphasized that the following foundational elements must be in place for the successful establishment and long-term operation of data centres:

- Electrical Grid Capacity and Redundancy
  A robust and expandable electrical grid is the top priority for data centres. This includes the ability to scale up power supply and the presence of redundant systems (e.g., multiple power lines or sources) to ensure reliability.
  - *Large-scale Data Centres* - typically begin operations at 0.2–0.3 gigawatts (GW), with long-term expansion plans reaching up to 1 GW.
  - *Smaller Capacity Data Centres* - usually require 30–100 megawatts (MW).
  - While large cities are preferred due to infrastructure readiness, secondary municipalities are gaining interest—provided their grids can meet current and future capacity needs.
- High-Bandwidth Fiber Connectivity
  Reliable broadband fiber connectivity, with redundancy, is critical. Data centres must be able to connect to high-capacity fiber trunks (points of presence) that often run between major urban centres. Fiber redundancy ensures uninterrupted service by providing a backup communication line in the event of a failure.
- Availability of Suitable Industrial Land
  - *Large-scale Data Centres* - require 500 to 1,000 acres to accommodate both immediate operations and long-term expansion. These facilities are built with integrated infrastructure that supports modular growth.
  - *Smaller Capacity Data Centres* - typically require 30 to 100 acres.
- Proximity to Urban Centres
  While data centres prefer proximity to large urban centres to serve nearby data needs efficiently, being farther away is not a dealbreaker. The key is to balance proximity with other logistical and operational considerations.
- Labour Requirements
  - *Large-scale Data Centres* – larger facilities, such as hyper scale facilities, range from 50-300 required on-site staff. This will depend on the scale and complexity of operations.
  - *Smaller Capacity Data Centres* – typically require approximately 10-30 on-site staff. With this lower labour demand, the entry benefit makes them attractive investments for regions with limited workforce availability.

Key Insight:

- The stringent infrastructure and utility demands of large-scale data centres—particularly regarding grid capacity and land availability—may present challenges for a smaller municipality. However, opportunities remain for regions that can meet the foundational requirements of smaller capacity data centre developments.

2.3 Investment Attraction Partners

Invest Alberta

Invest Alberta operates as an arm's length corporation of the provincial government, with a primary mission to attract international companies to the province. To achieve this, they engage in a range of strategic initiatives, including participation in global trade shows, hosting trade missions, and managing investment leads from global industries. With a robust team and offices in key regions such as the US, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, Invest Alberta is well-positioned to facilitate international business connections.

Partnership Benefits:
As the Town expands its efforts in attracting data centres, leveraging the expertise and resources of Invest Alberta's global network will be invaluable. They are currently focused on data centre development and their connections to industry networks and markets worldwide can provide crucial support in accessing and establishing new markets.

Alberta Ministry of Jobs, Economy, Trade and Immigration

The Alberta Ministry of Jobs, Economy, Trade and Immigration is a key provincial government body dedicated to driving economic development, trade, and investment in Alberta. Through its Export, Trade, and International Relations division, they play a pivotal role in expanding Alberta's economic footprint both regionally and globally.

Their operations are supported by a network of Regional Economic Development Specialists (REDS) and international teams. REDS are based in ten offices across Alberta, bringing deep local expertise on the economic opportunities and challenges specific to each region. They provide tailored services to economic development practitioners and business service providers, including:

- Advisory services and outcome-based planning
- Economic information and best practices
- Pathfinding support
- Tools and resources

These services are delivered through one-on-one consultations, regional and community meetings, webinars, and collaborative roundtable discussions.

On the international stage, their global teams work to attract investment to Alberta by leveraging their presence both locally and through a network of international offices. Located in key regions such as Europe, the Middle East, Africa, the Indo-Pacific, Latin America, and the United States, these teams engage in industry attraction initiatives. Their work includes organizing and managing incoming and outgoing trade missions and participating in global trade shows. More information can be found on the Alberta International Offices website

Partnership Benefits:
This division offers invaluable resources, including global industry networking, initiatives, and investment attraction support. The international team regularly attends key global trade shows, which are listed under the Events section of the Export Alberta website. Municipalities and local industries can participate in these events alongside the international team or collaborate with their regional offices to enhance industry attraction efforts.

Additionally, municipalities and local businesses have access to a range of business grants aimed at supporting economic development. These opportunities are detailed on the province of Alberta website under Economic Development funding and Grants.

Invest in Canada

Invest in Canada connects corporations to opportunities to grow, expand, and succeed in Canada. They are Canada's investment promotion agency and their mission centres on two key mandates: promoting foreign direct investment (FDI) in Canada and facilitating and accelerating these investments by coordinating efforts among government bodies, the private sector, and other stakeholders.

They work with a vast network of partners, including governments at all levels, investment promotion agencies and industry associations across Canada. They also collaborate with Global Affairs Canada's Trade Commissioner Service, which has Trade Commissioners stationed in 160 cities worldwide. They engage in promoting FDI through various initiatives that include engaging with international companies and participating in global trade shows.

Partnership Benefits:
Invest in Canada provides additional foreign investment exposure as a federal organization and is complimented by the reach of the Trade Commissioners and their global offices and consulates. Even though they are a federal organization and have similar functions to the provincial partners, they maintain a regional focus through representatives dedicated to every area of the country. Municipalities can leverage this regional focus by participating in trade shows and industry attraction efforts alongside Invest in Canada.

Alberta Innovates

Alberta Innovates offers comprehensive support to innovators across post-secondary institutions, as well as small, medium, and large enterprises. They provide funding, coaching, and vital connections to help these entities thrive. Additionally, Alberta Innovates extends a broad array of services to partner organizations, collaborators, and government agencies. In addition to their main organization, they oversee two key subsidiaries: C-FER Technologies, which delivers engineering and testing services to the global energy sector, and InnoTech Alberta, which focuses on applied research and technology development for industry and government.

Partnership Benefits:
Alberta Innovates has extensive innovation and technology services, combined with their business grants, which make them a valuable partner for various stakeholders. For foreign direct investment (FDI) purposes, they offer significant advantages by promoting their resources to international companies considering investments in the region. Alberta Innovates serves as a critical resource and stakeholder, enhancing the value proposition for foreign companies looking to establish or expand their presence in Alberta.

Alberta AI Data Centre Concierge Service

As part of Alberta's AI Data Centres Strategy , the province offers a dedicated AI Data Centre Concierge Service to support investors and operators entering the Alberta market.

The concierge team serves as a centralized point of contact within the Government of Alberta, connecting project proponents with the appropriate regulatory bodies and regional partners. Their role is to help navigate the provincial regulatory landscape, offering guidance on legislative requirements and facilitating timely approvals.

In addition to regulatory navigation, the team helps streamline access to key partnerships, and existing infrastructure—accelerating project timelines and enabling faster speed to market.

Partnership Benefits:

The concierge team provides targeted guidance on legislative requirements for data centres and assists with expediting approvals through Alberta's regulatory bodies. They also work closely with provincial partners such as Invest Alberta and Alberta Innovates to connect companies with strategic resources related to site selection, innovation supports, and market-entry advantages.

2.4 Business Grant Resources

2.4.1 Programs and Incentives for Business

Strategic Innovation Fund – Stream 2 Business Innovation and Growth Projects (Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada)

Program Summary

The Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF) is a program offered by Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada to support business led innovation and growth projects that benefit Canada economy. Eligible projects must be undertaken by a for-profit business or cooperative incorporated in Canada, or a partnership proposing to carry out business in Canada. The project must have a minimum of 20 million dollars in total eligible costs, with a minimum of 10 million dollars to be requested as part of the program. Further details can be found at the program website.

- Key Objectives:
  - Encouraging businesses to invest in accelerating the growth and expansion of innovative businesses sectors which have been Identified as a priority growth segments in the Canadian economy.
  - Current funding priorities in specific investment areas include: decarbonization of large emitters, critical minerals, aerospace, and the artificial intelligence computing challenge.
  - Support a wide range of large-scale, transformative and collaborative projects that encourage business innovation and growth.
  - Prioritize advancement for networks of collaboration between the private sector, research institutions and non-profit organizations in key emerging technology sectors and in industrial R&D and commercialization.

- Eligibility Criteria:
    - Must be a for-profit business or cooperative incorporated in Canada, or a partnership proposing to carry out business in Canada.
    - Must have more than 10 full time employees.
    - Will be requesting at least $10 million from the Strategic Innovation Fund for a project with eligible program costs of at least $20 million.
    - The organization must be able to provide financial statements for the past 3 years of operations.
    - Candidates must hold all necessary intellectual property rights for the successful execution of the project.
    - Have secured, or intend to secure within the next 6 months, a significant portion of the funds required to support the launch of the project.
    - The project falls under one of the priority investment areas identified by SIF, such as the Artificial Intelligence Compute Challenge to build out or expand net-new AI compute capacity in Canada.
- Funding Details:
    - Minimum SIF contribution amount is $10 million for a project with at least $20 million in total eligible supported costs.
    - Contribution amounts are repayable by default but may be non-repayable based upon the terms of the formal contribution agreement.

Business Scale-up and Productivity in the Prairie Provinces (PrairiesCan)

Program Summary

The Business Scale-up and Productivity in the prairie provinces is a federal program administered by PrairiesCan to support high-growth businesses in scaling up and enhancing their productivity through innovative goods, services, or technologies. It offers interest-free repayable funding for projects with a duration of up to three years by incorporated business that have been operating in Canada for at least two years. The program may cover up to 50% of eligible costs, ranging from $200,000 to $5,000,000 per project. Further details can be found at the program website.

- Key Objectives:
    - To develop and diversify the economies of the prairie provinces by promoting high-growth business expansion that creates jobs for highly qualified personnel.
    - Promote projects that accelerate business growth through one of the three key activities: business scale-up, technology commercialization, productivity Improvement.
    - The program is applicable to projects in one of seven specific priority investment areas including advance manufacturing, clean resources, clean technology, digital industries, health sciences, natural resources, and value-added agriculture.
- Eligibility Criteria:
    - Must be a high-growth business incorporated in Canada that is scaling up to produce innovative goods, services, or technologies.
    - Must have been operating for a minimum of two years in the prairie provinces.
    - Must have a maximum project duration of three years.

    - Projects must be included under one of the seven priority investment areas.
    - Must have confirmed funding from all other sources, including government and non-government (non-government funding must represent at least 50% of the proposed project costs at the time of expression of interest (EOI) submission.
- Funding Details:
    - Interest-Free Repayable Contributions: Up to 50% of eligible costs, ranging from a minimum of $200,000 up to $5,000,000 per project.
    - Repayment Terms: Interest-free repayments begin one year after project completion and are made in monthly installments over five years. No collateral is required, and there is no penalty for early repayment.
    - No more than $10,000,000 will be given to one organization for any number of projects under the program.

2.4.2 Programs and Incentives for Communities

Community Investments Funding Grants to Attract Foreign Direct Investment to Canada (CanExport)

Program Summary

The CanExport Community Investments program provides financial support to Canadian communities to help them attract, retain, and expand foreign direct investment (FDI). This funding can be used to support FDI training, a strategic plan for attracting FDI, marketing tools aimed at foreign investors, and lead generation and meetings with potential investors. The program covers up to 50% of eligible expenses and includes a non-repayable grant of between $3,000 to $500,000. Further details can be found at the program website.

- Key Objectives:
    - Supports activities that will help communities attract, expand, or retain greenfield foreign direct investment.
    - Create jobs for Canadians by fostering innovation and increasing exports through attraction, retention, and expansion of foreign direct investment.
- Eligibility Criteria:
    - Is a community, community-level organization, municipal organization, or non-profit.
    - The organization has a mandate to attract, expand, or retain greenfield FDI.
    - The organization must be incorporated as a legal entity and be able to enter into legally binding agreements.
    - The investment that is being attracted attract must be from an international business establishing or expanding operations in Canada.
    - Funding is provided to support FDI training, a strategic plan for attracting FDI, marketing tools aimed at foreign investors, and lead generation and meetings with potential investors.

- Funding Details:
    - Total non-repayable grants of between $3,000 to $500,000.
    - Funding agreements are for a one-year period, from April 1 to March 31.
    - Grants cover up to 50% of eligible expenses to help attract, retain, and expand foreign direct investment (FDI).
    - If the organization gets other federal government support, total federal support cannot be more than 50%.

Northern and Regional Economic Development Program (Government of Alberta)

Program Summary

The Northern and Regional Economic Development (NRED) Program funds initiatives led by Alberta municipalities, Indigenous communities and non-profit organizations that promote regional economic development and diversification. Some applicable project types include planning/feasibility studies, training or events, marketing and investment, business retention or expansion, and other innovative initiatives or pilot projects. The program will provide up to 50% of total eligible costs for projects between $20,000 and $300,000. Further details can be found at the program website.

- **Key Objectives:**
    - The program funds initiatives that support economic development and will achieve tangible and impactful results in one or more of the identified priority areas.
    - Three priority areas have been identified as part of the programs scope including, increase investment readiness, planning and feasibility studies that lead to economic development, and supporting local business retention or expansion.
- **Eligibility Criteria:**
    - Projects must fall under one of the three priority areas that have been identified by the program.
    - Must be a municipality, an incorporated non-profit organization that has an economic development mandate, or an Indigenous community.
    - Projects must not take more than three years to complete and must be ready to begin immediately at the start of the grant.
    - Only certain project types will be considered, including planning/feasibility studies, training or events, marketing and investment, business retention and expansion, or other innovative initiatives that support investment readiness and economic development.
- **Funding Details:**
    - The program will provide up to 50% of total eligible project costs.
    - Total eligible costs for the project must be between $20,000 and $300,000.
    - Applicants must be able to match the funding requested at a minimum of 50% of the total project cost.

2.5 Key Market Companies

The global data centre industry is relatively concentrated around a few large companies that have the investment capital and technical expertise required to run large hyperscale facilities. These hyperscale facilities have the processing power and network connectivity that are necessary to offer high-capacity cloud services to a large number of consumers in markets with high levels of demand.

Cloud services in the data centre industry are generally categorized into three main types: Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS), Platform as a Service (PaaS), and software as a Service (SaaS). IaaS and PaaS are the most common form of cloud computing service utilized by businesses and commercial customers. They refer to data centres that rent out portions of their infrastructure to customers so that they may operate their own cloud base service (IaaS), and data centres that rent space on a ready to use cloud hosted platform for development and operation of applications (PaaS). The four companies below make up the majority of global IaaS and PaaS related services. Their average global market share over the last five years is shown in Figure 9.[19] Digital Realty and Equinix are also considered large players in the global market, but are classified as a different category since they operate through a leasing model.

- Amazon Web Services (AWS)
- Microsoft (Azure)
- Google (GCP)
- Alibaba

Other significant industry players which operate more specialized types of facilities, offer specific types of data services, or have higher degrees of regional concentration include:

- Oracle
- Meta
- IBM
- SAP
- eStruxture
- Vantage

[19] Worldwide infrastructure as a service (IaaS) and platform as a service (PaaS) hyperscaler market share from 2020 to 2024. Wikibon (2025), as cited in Statista Data Centre Market Report (2025).

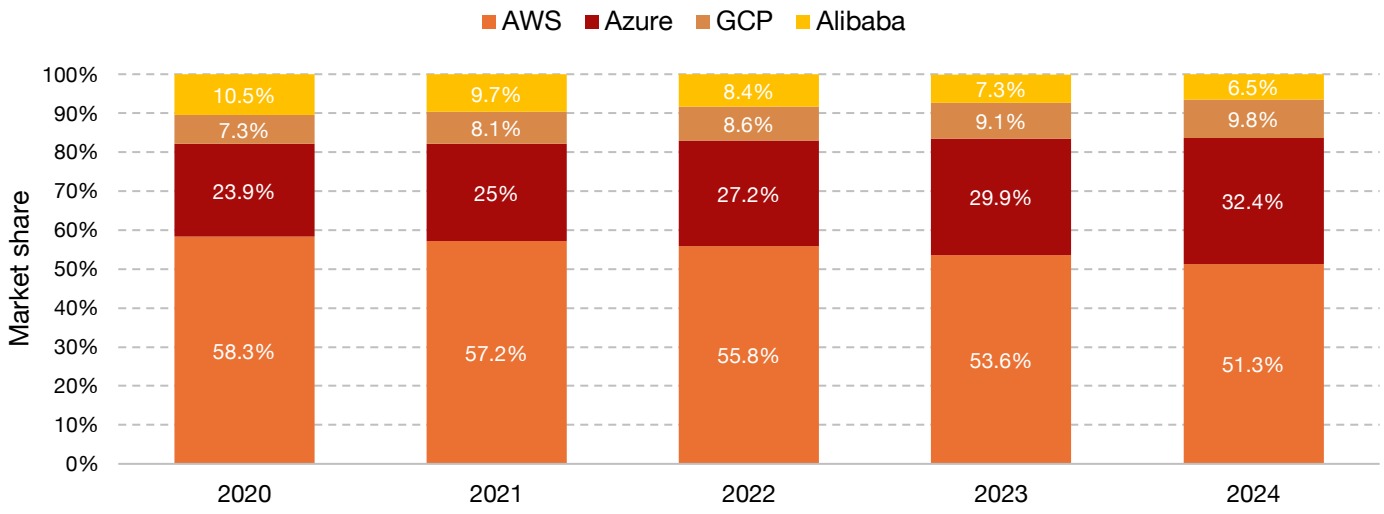

Figure 9: Worldwide IaaS and PaaS Hyperscale Market Share from 2020-2024

The majority of development in the data centre industry has been focused on new facilities in the Americas and Europe, with secondary markets in the Middle East and Asia. This has primarily been due to a larger concentration of customers and more thoroughly developed internet infrastructure in these regions, although more significant development has begun to take place in Asia over recent years.

The Americas continue to hold a significant share of the global data centre market. Leading industry players such as Equinix and Digital Realty have consistently maintained between 43% and 46% of their total data centre facilities in the region over the past four years. The geographic distribution and total number of data centres operated by these companies are illustrated in Figure 10[20] and Figure 11.[21]

[20] Number of Equinix International Business Exchange (IBX) data centres worldwide from 2016 to 2024 by region (2025). Equinix, as cited in Statista Data Centre Market Report (2025).

[21] Digital Realty's global data centre building portfolio from 2021 to 2024 by region (2025). Digital Realty, as cited in Statista Data Centre Market Report (2025).

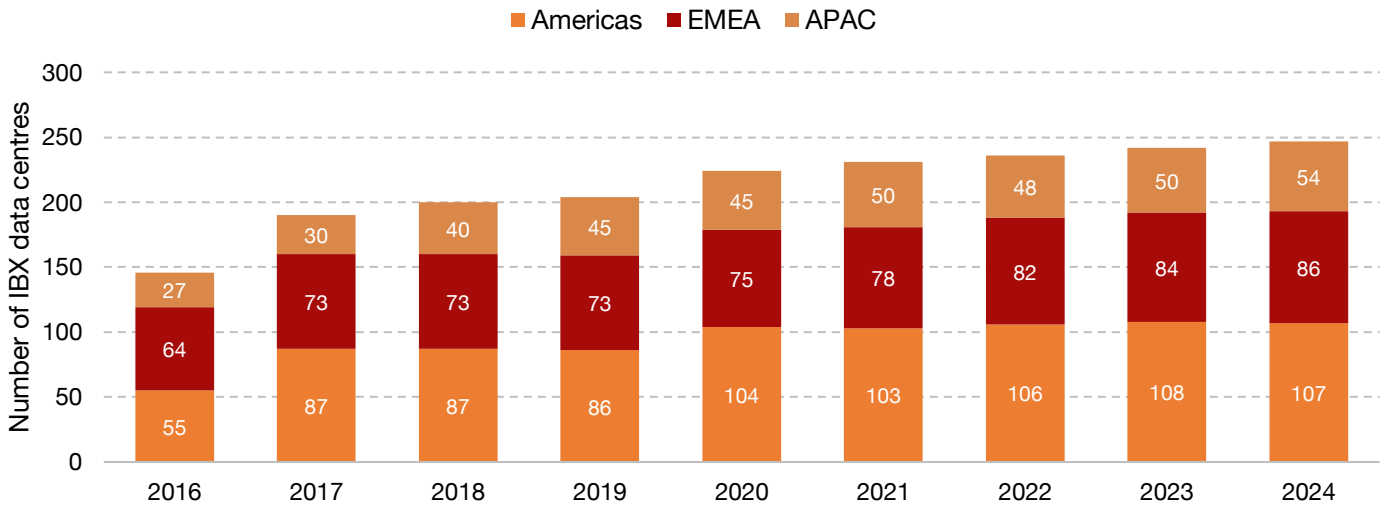

Figure 10: Worldwide Number of Equinix International Business Exchange (IBX) Data Centres by Region

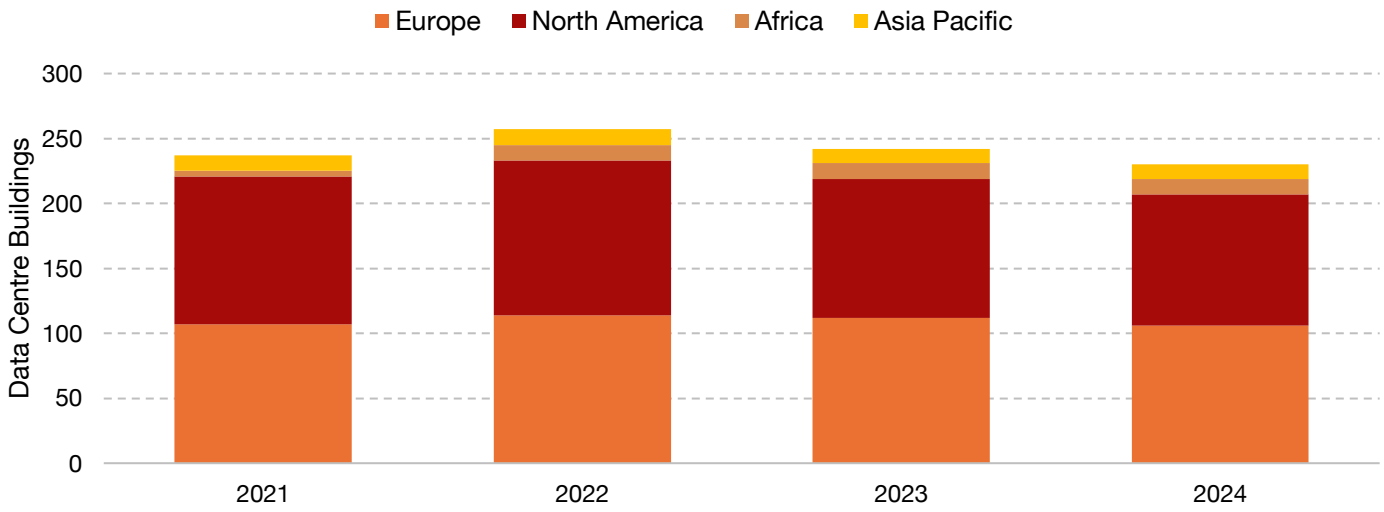

Figure 11: Worldwide Number of Digital Realty's Data Centres by Region

3 Investment Capacity of Rocky Mountain House

3.1 Strategy and Policy Alignment

A review of the Town's core municipal documents and policies was conducted to assess the alignment of existing strategies and policies with data centre investment initiatives, as well as to identify any potential barriers or constraints. The objective was to ensure the Town's strategic direction supports growth in the data centre industry and to flag any policy misalignments that could hinder investment. No policy-related challenges or constraints were identified. Key passages that directly enable or encourage such growth are summarized below.

Municipal Development Plan (MDP)

Aligned or relevant sections:

- 3.1 Vision (p22)
    - a forward-thinking, innovative, and prosperous community that supports diverse local businesses and industries and is full of opportunity for growth and change.
- 3.2 Guiding Principles (p22)
    - Resilient, Diverse Economy: Rocky Mountain House supports a diverse and prosperous economy.
- 3.3 Goals (p23)
    - B. Build a resilient, diverse economy
    - G. Foster Regional Cooperation
        - 1. Work with Clearwater County to identify and protect future growth areas for both municipalities.
        - 2. Ensure an appropriate supply of land and infrastructure is available to accommodate future growth.
- Policies – 4.1 Growth Management (p28)
    - a) The Town shall monitor the growth of the town and update its Land Supply and Growth Study every five years to ensure a 20 to 25-year supply of commercial, industrial, and residential land.
- Policies – 4.3 Economic Development (p30)
    - a) The Town will actively work to diversify the local and regional economic base by marketing developable land to new and existing industries.
    - h) The Town will continue to identify opportunities to pre-service vacant industrial and commercial land to incentivize development.
- Policies – 6.2 Utilities and Servicing (p52)
    - b) The Town shall ensure its utility systems are adaptive to changing technologies.
    - e) The Town will encourage the installation of infrastructure and facilities related to broadband telecommunication services in all new developing areas and major redevelopment areas.

2021-2025 Economic Development Strategy

Aligned or relevant sections:

- Pillar 1 – Investment Readiness
    - Objective 1.1 – Develop Investment Ready Sites
    - Objective 1.2 – Secure Infrastructure Investments
- Pillar 4 – Investment Attraction
    - Objective 4.1 – Develop a Lead Generation Pipeline

2024-2026 Strategic Plan

Aligned or relevant sections:

- "Economic" Pillar – Our Commercial and Industrial Sectors are Growing
    - Investing in a Rocky Promotion program to attract new business.

Town of Rocky Mountain House Land Use Bylaw (Amended by Bylaw 2022/02, Bylaw 2024/13, and Bylaw 2025/06)

Updated to reflect Data Processing Centres allowed as Discretionary Uses in the following zones:

- Core Commercial Mixed Use District (C)
    - Data Processing Centre-Minor
- Local Commercial District (LC)
    - Data Processing Centre-Minor
- Highway Commercial District (HC)
    - Data Processing Centre-Minor
- General Industrial District (I)
    - Data Processing Centre-Minor
    - Data Processing Centre-Major

Development Incentives Relevant to a New Non-residential Build

To stimulate and expand the use of non-residential properties:

- Offsite Levies Deferred
    - Deferring offsite levies to provide a developer additional time to pay levies.
- Non-residential Tax Incentive for Building Construction or Expansion
    - Tiered tax exemptions for up to five years based on the assessed value of the development.

3.2 Industry Legislation

The legislation applicable to building a data centre facility in Alberta largely depends on the specific location and operational characteristics of the project. In many cases—particularly where a data centre is developed on existing industrial land and connects to existing utility services (e.g., electricity, water, and sewage)—there are no unique legislative requirements. In such scenarios, a data centre can typically be constructed and operated like any other industrial business.

However, certain conditions may trigger the need for legislative review or regulatory approvals. These include:

- **High Electrical Load Requirements:** On June 4, 2025, the Alberta Electric System Operator (AESO)—the independent operator of Alberta's electrical grid—announced a cap of 1.2 megawatts(MW) for new, large-load data centres in Alberta through 2028. This cap applies to projects with loads of 75 megawatts or more. Large-scale data centres must consult with AESO to confirm that their power requirements can be accommodated within this cap. There are currently 29 prospective projects seeking 16 gigawatts (GW) of grid connections in the province.

- **Changes to the Existing Electrical Grid:** If a data centre requires upgrades to the local or regional grid—such as substation expansion or additional transformer installations—it must coordinate with AESO and the relevant utility provider to obtain approval. Securing approvals for this type of infrastructure expansion typically takes two to five years, depending on the complexity and regulatory requirements. The utility provider may also request long-term use commitments or contributions to capital costs.

- **Off-Grid Power Generation:** Data centres intending to generate their own electricity (e.g., via a natural gas-powered substation) must seek approval from the Alberta Utilities Commission for off-grid energy solutions.

- **Use of Public or Crown Land:** If a proposed facility is located on public or Crown land, companies must consult the Government of Alberta and adhere to the Public Lands Act. Approval is required for any such use.

- **Environmental Considerations:** Projects with potential to impact the surrounding environment beyond standard industrial development—such as those affecting protected areas or significantly altering local ecosystems—must comply with the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act. Consultation with Alberta Environment and Protected Areas is recommended in such cases.

- **Foreign Ownership of Land:** The acquisition of large tracts of industrial land by foreign entities may require review or approval by the provincial government. Companies should contact the Foreign Ownership of Land Administration Office for guidance.

- **Aboriginal Consultation:** If a data centre project may affect Indigenous lands or rights, companies must consult with the Aboriginal Consultation Office. This includes any potential encroachment on or impact to adjacent Indigenous communities or traditional territories.

3.3 Regional Workforce

3.3.1 Defining the Regional Labour Market

The Town of Rocky Mountain House is located in a relatively sparsely populated area of the province. Looking at commuting ranges of the surrounding municipalities, the catchment area of the local labour market can be determined. Table 2 shows the share of the labour market by commuting time in the surrounding municipalities. [22] This table shows how far people are willing to commute in any of these municipalities and, subsequently, what share of the labour market would be willing to commute to Rocky Mountain House.

Municipality	Less than 15 minutes	15 to 29 minutes	30 to 44 minutes	45 to 59 minutes	60 minutes and over	Distance to Rocky Mountain House	Share of the labour market willing to commute
Clearwater County	26%	36%	17%	7%	13%	0-45 minutes	100%
Sylvan Lake	32%	35%	19%	5%	10%	40 minutes	15%
Red Deer County	26%	41%	19%	6%	8%	45 minutes	14%
Red Deer	45%	39%	9%	2%	4%	60 minutes	4%
Blackfalds	27%	47%	14%	4%	7%	60 minutes	7%
Lacombe	45%	32%	15%	3%	5%	60 minutes	5%
Lacombe County	28%	34%	22%	9%	7%	45 minutes	16%
Ponoka County	30%	30%	20%	9%	11%	55 minutes	11%

Table 2: Commuting distance in municipalities surrounding Rocky Mountain House (2021 data)

The table reveals that, even though Rocky Mountain House is between a 40 and 60 minute drive from most municipalities, a favourable share of the surrounding labour market commutes distances over 45 minutes. For instance, the table shows that Ponoka County is an approximate 55-minute drive from Rocky Mountain House. Nonetheless, 11% of the labour market commutes 60 minutes or more, implying that 11% of the labour market may be willing to commute to Rocky Mountain House for work. This 11% is part of Rocky Mountain House's catchment area for labour. The data discussed for the Rocky Mountain House catchment area in the following sections includes the share of the regional labour market willing to commute to Rocky Mountain House. To illustrate, 4% of Red Deer's population, 15% of Sylvan Lake's educational attainment counts, and 14% of Red Deer County's labour supply are included in the numbers reported for Rocky Mountain House's catchment area.

[22] Main mode of commuting by commuting duration, time leaving for work, age and gender, Statistics Canada

3.3.2 Demographics and Education

The median age of the population within the catchment area of the Town's labour market sat at 42.3 years in 2021. Compared to Alberta, the regional population is slightly older as the provincial median age sat at 37.9 years in the same year.

The population of the catchment area has grown at a steady pace in the last two years. It recorded a 1.8% increase in population in 2023 and 2.1% in 2024. The provincial population also grew during these years, albeit it at a faster 3.9% and 4.4% in 2023 and 2024. The population, and thus the regional labour supply, of the catchment area was 34,466 people in 2024.

The educational attainment counts in the catchment area are shown in Table 3. [23] It shows that a large share of the population, 56%, has a postsecondary education. Within this group, most people (23%) have a college, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma, an apprenticeship or trades certification or diploma (16%), or a bachelor's degree or higher (14%). While 32% of the population report a high school diploma as their highest level of education, the overall educational profile is notably strong, with a significant portion holding postsecondary credentials.

Educational attainment	Count	Share
No certificate, diploma or degree	4,226	12%
High (secondary) school diploma or equivalency certificate	10,999	32%
Postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree	19,241	56%
Non-apprenticeship trades certificate or diploma	961	3%
Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma	5,395	16%
College, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma	7,943	23%
University certificate or diploma below bachelor level	951	3%
Bachelor's degree or higher	4,948	14%

Table 3: Educational attainment shares in the Rocky Mountain House catchment area (2021 data)

3.3.3 Labour Supply

Statistics Canada does not provide public labour market information at the municipal level outside of the census. To counter this issue, Ballad has built its own in-house model to estimate labour demand and supply statistics at a municipal level by 3-digit NAICS and NOC codes, allowing us to provide expert assessments specific to the regions in which our clients operate. Given the lack of government issued estimates, Ballad's model achieves valuable regional insights not readily gained from federal or provincial data. As there is no official labour market information available for the Rocky Mountain House catchment area, we have used this model to estimate labour supply, demand, and any possible shortages for the region. The top twenty occupations with the largest labour supply in 2023 in the Rocky Mountain House catchment area are shown in Table 4 below. [24]

[23] Census of the Population, Statistics Canada
[24] Ballad calculations

Rank	3-Digit NOC	Labour supply
1	800 Middle management occupations in production and agriculture	1,277
2	131 Administrative occupations	914
3	652 Support occupations in food, accommodation and tourism	900
4	733 Transportation occupations	892
5	651 Sales support occupations	737
6	600 Middle management occupations in retail and wholesale trade and customer services	737
7	851 Harvesting, landscaping and natural resources labourers	640
8	641 Retail salespersons and non-technical wholesale trade sales and account representatives	587
9	724 Technical maintenance trades	571
10	653 Support occupations in cleaning and related services	553
11	820 Supervisors in natural resources, agriculture and related production	545
12	751 Helpers and laborers	518
13	632 Occupations in services	473
14	412 Professional occupations in education services	452
15	723 Technical construction trades	418
16	841 Workers in natural resources and fisheries	414
17	331 Assisting occupations in support of health services	406
18	313 Nursing and allied health professionals	385
19	141 Office, court, and data support occupations	384
20	422 Paraprofessional occupations in legal, social, community and education services	361
26	722 Technical electrical trades	301
57	212 Professional occupations in applied sciences (except engineering)	114

Table 4: Top twenty occupations with the largest labour supply in the Rocky Mountain House catchment area

The most relevant occupational sub-major groups for data centre operations are “Technical Electrical Trades” and “Professional Occupations in Applied Sciences (Except Engineering)”. These groups include key roles such as apprentice electricians, power system electricians, computer and information systems professionals, data warehouse analysts, and database administrators, among others.

Within the Rocky Mountain catchment area, the Technical Electrical Trades group comprises 301 individuals and the Professional Occupations in Applied Sciences (Except Engineering) group includes 114 individuals. Collectively, these figures represent a good starting supply of labour to support the initial staffing requirements of a data centre in the Town

Key Insights:

- The regional catchment area benefits from a highly educated population, with a strong concentration of postsecondary graduates.
- There is a good initial supply of skilled labour suited to support data centre operations.

3.4 Industrial Land Servicing

Vacant land parcels within the Town and the surrounding County were visually inspected and evaluated to identify potential sites suitable for data centre development. All sites, along with their respective development capacities, are outlined in the tables below and correspond to the referenced maps.

3.4.1 Town and County Land Maps

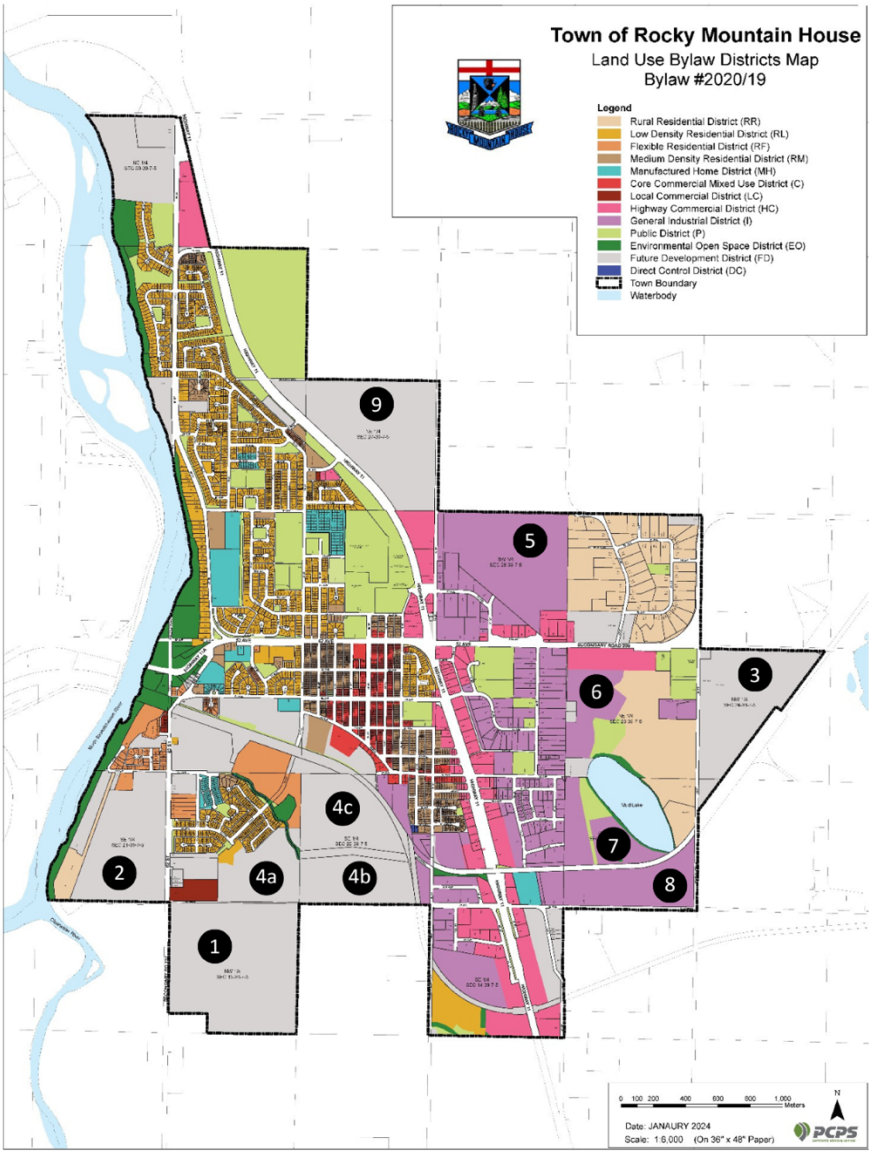

Figure 12: Town of Rocky Mountain House - Land Use Bylaw District Map

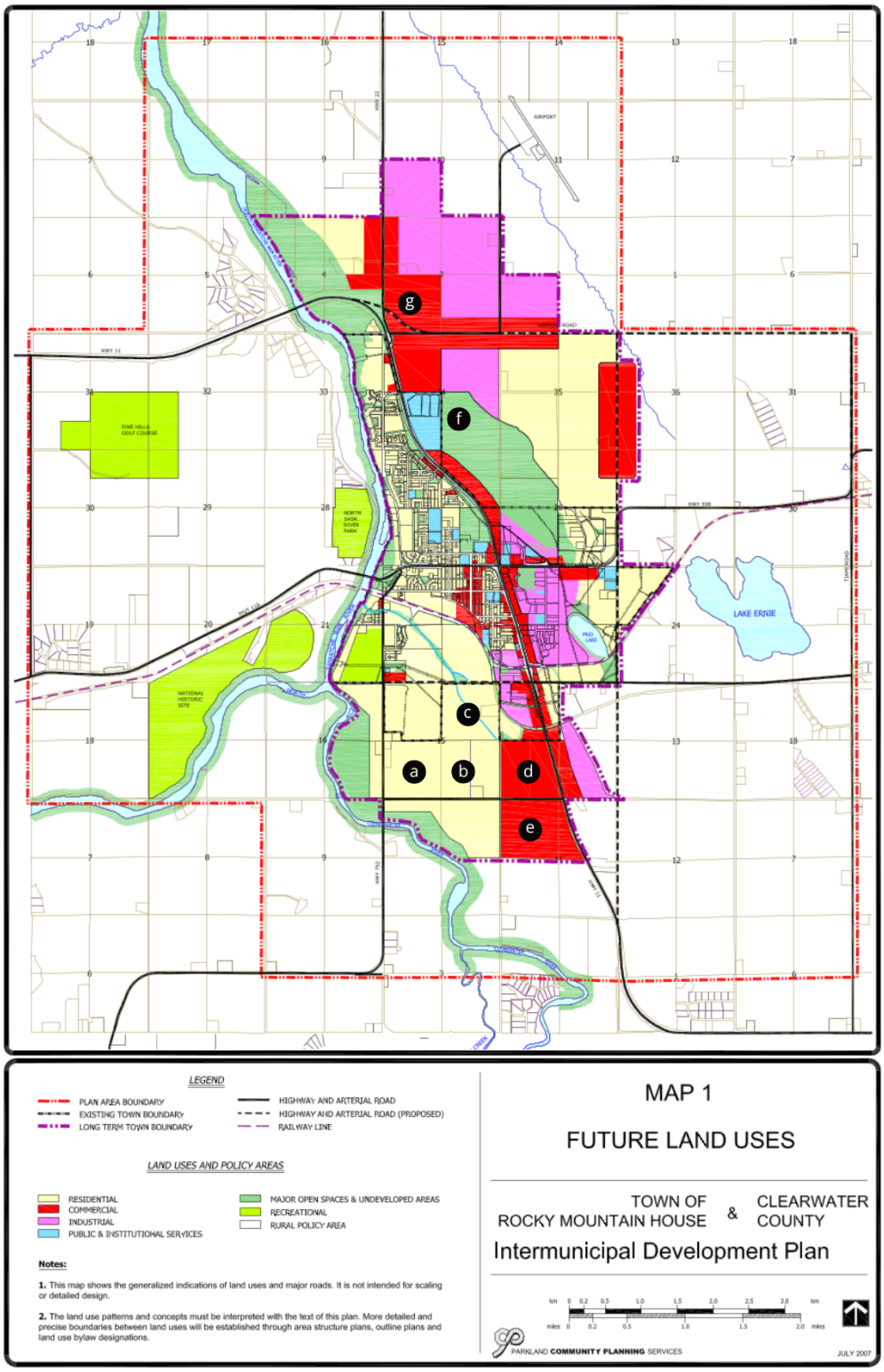

Figure 13: Clearwater County and Town of Rocky Mountain House Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP) - Future Land Use Map

3.4.2 TOWN SITES

2	
Candidate Site	Yes – for smaller data centre
Title Number	212 116 109
Area (acres)	85.94
Zoning	Future Development District (FD)
Development Capacity	• Flat land, no need for extensive grading. • Highway access on east side (Hwy 752) and road access on north side. • Serviced to property line • Future Development District would have to be converted to either Core Commercial Mixed Use, Local Commercial District, or General Industrial District to allow the discretionary use of Data Processing Centre - Minor. • Surrounding County land planned for future land use: ○ Small amount of expansion land available on south side for expansion

6	
Candidate Site	Yes – for smaller data centre
Title Number	092231885
Area (acres)	123
Zoning	Rural Residential District (RR) / General Industrial District (I) / Environmental Open Space District (EO) / Public District (P) / Highway Commercial District (HC)

Development Capacity	This parcel offers sufficient space to accommodate a small data centre; however, several challenges must be addressed to support development:
	  ○ It is not easily accessible as there are no main roads going into the site.
	  ○ It is heavily forested and has marches. It would require extensive grading.
	  ○ The east side is zoned residential and may require a zoning amendment.
	• Surrounding County land planned for future land use:
	  ○ None is available.

1	
Candidate Site	No
Title Number	082521868
Area (acres)	151.1
Zoning	Future Development District (FD)

Development Capacity	• Highway access on west side (Hwy 752).
	• Gravel road on southside.
	• Existing land is farmland and rolling hills and 1/3 is forested. Would require extensive grading.
	• Servicing reaches halfway through north quarter section (Creekside residential).
	• Surrounding County land planned for future land use:
	  ○ Quarter section on southside (a) has rolling hills and is zoned as Residential.
	  ○ Quarter sections on east (c) and southeast (b) are forested and zoned Residential.

4a	
Candidate Site	No
Title Number	172075514030
Area (acres)	44.85
Zoning	Low Density Residential District (RL) / Future Development District (FD)
Development Capacity	• Site is too small. • Existing land is very uneven with hills and earth piles from adjacent residential development. Would require extensive grading. • Would likely serve as south expansion to north residential. • Surrounding County land planned for future land use: ○ None is available.

4b	
Candidate Site	No
Title Number	NA
Area (acres)	49.45
Zoning	Future Development District (FD)
Development Capacity	• Site is too small. • Dense forest and ravine. It would require extensive grading. • Surrounding County land planned for future land use: ○ South quarter section (c) is forested and zoned as future residential.

4c	
Candidate Site	No
Title Number	NA
Area (acres)	59.75
Zoning	Future Development District (FD)
Development Capacity	• Site is too small. • Dense forest and ravine. It would require extensive grading. • Surrounding County land planned for future land use: ○ None is available.

7	
Candidate Site	No
Title Number	122216438
Area (acres)	47.7
Zoning	General Industrial District (I) / Environmental Open Space District (EO) / Public District (P)
Development Capacity	• Site is too small. • No road access. • Has an oil pump station in the middle of the parcel. • Cut off from site 8 by rail line. • Surrounding County land planned for future land use: ○ None is available.

8	
Candidate Site	No
Title Number	072 074 532
Area (acres)	51.76
Zoning	General Industrial District (I)
Development Capacity	• Site is too small. • Cut off from site 7 by rail line. • 30% forest and march. • Road access on south side. • Surrounding County land planned for future land use: ○ None is available.

3	
Candidate Site	No
Title Number	222210721
Area (acres)	89.1
Zoning	Future Development District (FD)
Development Capacity	• Rail crosses the entire east side of the site. • Some rolling hills and 50% forest. It would require extensive grading. • Gravel road on north side. • Surrounding County land planned for future land use: ○ None is available.

5	
Candidate Site	No
Title Number	NA
Area (acres)	99.88
Zoning	General Industrial District (I)
Development Capacity	• 1/3 of site already developed, thus smaller amount of land available. • Remaining site on north side is forest and valley. It would require extensive grading and/or land development. • Surrounding County land planned for future land use: ○ Northern County land is forested.

9	
Candidate Site	No
Title Number	142060170
Area (acres)	117.16
Zoning	Future Development District (FD)
Development Capacity	• Site is partially developed with gravel/construction yard and it has a small lake/pond, thus smaller amount of land available. • Remaining land is forested. It would require extensive grading and/or clearing. • Surrounding County land planned for future land use: ○ North side county land (f) could not be accessed to view topography; thus it could not be assessed for development capacity.

3.4.3 County Sites – Future Land Use

d and e	
Candidate Site	Yes – for smaller data centre
Title Number	NA
Area (acres)	d = 144 / e = 160 / Total = 306
Zoning	d = Commercial (future use) / e = Currently crown land

Development Capacity	• d:
	  ○ Hwy access on east side (Hwy 11)
	  ○ Road access on southside
	  ○ Flat land
	  ○ 20% forest. Some clearing required.
	  ○ Servicing reaches halfway through north quarter section.
	• e:
	  ○ Hwy access on east side (Hwy 11)
	  ○ Road access on northside
	  ○ Flat land
	  ○ 30% forest. Some clearing required.
	  ○ Since this parcel is currently zoned as crown land, it might be challenging to rezone it to commercial or industrial.

g	
Candidate Site	Yes – for smaller data centre
Title Number	NA
Area (acres)	124 (could expand to 1,120 if surrounding parcels are incorporated)
Zoning	Commercial (future use)
Development Capacity	• If the site is easily developable, it could support industrial expansion, with approximately 1,120 acres across seven future land use parcels located on the east and north sides. • The closest servicing from the Town is two quarter sections away. • Future expansion or setbacks for water treatment lagoons would likely have to be considered for this site.

a	
Candidate Site	No
Title Number	NA
Area (acres)	160
Zoning	Residential
Development Capacity	• Is farmland and has rolling hills. Would require extensive grading.

b	
Candidate Site	No
Title Number	NA
Area (acres)	160
Zoning	Residential
Development Capacity	• Is all forested. Would require extensive grading and/or clearing

c	
Candidate Site	No
Title Number	NA
Area (acres)	160
Zoning	Residential
Development Capacity	• Is all forested. Would require extensive grading and/or clearing

f	
Candidate Site	No
Title Number	NA
Area (acres)	160
Zoning	Major Open Spaces & Undeveloped Areas
Development Capacity	• Could not access location to view topography. • If the site is easily developable, it could be used for future industrial expansion of site #9 in the Town. • Future expansion or setbacks for water treatment lagoons would likely have to be considered for this site.

3.5 Regional Utilities

To assess the Town's capacity to support the operational needs of data centres, we conducted interviews with key stakeholders responsible for the provision of electricity, data infrastructure, and water utilities. The findings are summarized below.

- **Fortis** (Electricity Provider)
    - Current Grid Capacity
        - The current regional grid has a surplus of 15-30MW available for additional use.
    - Infrastructure
        - The Town is serviced by one substation.
        - The substation has the physical capacity to accommodate another transformer, which would provide an additional 30 MW. Installation would require approval from AESO. Expansion approval can take two to three years.

    - Redundancy
        - A secondary backup line exists from an external substation; however, Fortis was unable to confirm the exact origin of this line.

- **Clearwater County** (Data Provider)
    - Current Bandwidth Capacity
        - The County has a substantial amount of bandwidth capacity and can provide 1.6 terabytes of data per fiber optic strand and has many strands available for use.
        - If further bandwidth is required, the County could do so and provide a cost and installation timeline.
        - The County can also lease full conduit space if required or lease dark fiber (i.e., fiber with no equipment on either end).
    - Infrastructure
        - There is a core backbone of fiber internet data infrastructure throughout the County and a main conduit through the Town on Main Street.
        - The system is connected to the high-capacity fibre trunk lines in Red Deer and in Calgary.

- **Rogers Communications** (Data Provider)
    - Current Bandwidth Capacity
        - Currently supports only the Town's existing bandwidth needs.
        - If further bandwidth is required, Rogers could provide it, but it would require significant capital costs for expansion.
    - Infrastructure
        - There is only one fiber line going into the Town.
        - While connected to the Red Deer trunk line, it lacks high-capacity bandwidth. A new connection would be required for upgraded service levels.

- **Telus Communications (via Ralcomm)** (Data Provider)
    - Current Bandwidth Capacity
        - Multiple attempts were made to engage with Telus to obtain information about their data capacity and infrastructure in the Town. Unfortunately, no response was received.

- **Town of Rocky Mountain House** (Water Utility)
    - Current Capacity
        - The Town's water treatment facility has ample capacity and can accommodate an estimated 70% increase in population.
        - Seasonal factors such as ice and sediment from heavy rainfall can temporarily impact water processing, although these are not critical concerns for data centre operations as it is not a large requirement.

    - Infrastructure
        - A new wastewater plant is planned to come online on October 2025 that will provide more effective treatment than the existing lagoon system.

4 Feasibility Summary

4.1 Capacity Analysis and Feasibility

Based on the comprehensive analysis conducted in this study, the Town of Rocky Mountain House demonstrates strong potential to attract and support small-capacity data centres. These facilities align well with the Town's existing infrastructure, business environment, and service capabilities. The development of large-scale data centres is a future possibility that has more intensive operational requirements which exceed the Town's present capacity.

The two factors that are applicable to all types of data centres and are key considerations are legislation requirements and the market environment. Both were found to be favourable. Generally, most data centre development can be completed like a standard industrial development and specific legislation would only apply to outlying conditions such as high electrical load requirements, off-grid electrical supply, and exceptional land or environmental considerations. From a market standpoint, the data centre industry continues to grow steadily and remains a well-established component of the broader North American digital infrastructure ecosystem.

Ultimately, operational requirements are the most defining factor in determining the feasibility of data centre development. The Town's current assets and capabilities align strongly with the needs of small-capacity facilities, and it is well-equipped to support their successful operation. A summary of key operational alignment factors is provided in Table 5 below.

Small-Capacity Data Centres		
Operational Requirements	Town Capacity	Resources

Land	Yes	• Requires: 30-100 acres
		• Town:
		  ○ 86 acres (site 2)
		  ○ 123 acres (site 6)
		  ○ 124 acres (site g – County Future Use)
		  ○ 306 acres (site d and e – County Future Use)

Electricity	Yes	• Requires: 30-100 MW • Town: surplus of 15-30 MW
Data	Yes	• Requires: high-capacity fibre trunk line with redundancy • Town: existing high-capacity fibre trunk line with redundancy from the County
Water	Yes	• Requires: average water supply • Town: can accommodate large increase in water supply
Labour	Yes	• Requires: small sized technical labour force • Town: has small technical labour supply
Large Scale Data Centres		
Operational Requirements	Town Capacity	Resources
Land	Future Potential	• Requires: 500-1000 acres • Town: annex an appropriately sized parcel of land
Electricity	Future Potential	• Requires: 0.2-0.3 GW, future use of up to 1GW • Town: current 15-30 MW surplus requires expansion
Data	Yes	• Requires: high-capacity fibre trunk line with redundancy • Town: existing high-capacity fibre trunk line with redundancy from the County
Water	Yes	• Requires: larger than average water supply • Town: can accommodate large increase in water supply
Labour	Partially	• Requires: medium sized technical labour force • Town: has small technical labour supply that could satisfy initial requirements

Table 5: Data Centre Operational Requirements - Required Resources and Town Capacity

4.2 Recommendations

To position the Town as a competitive and investment-ready destination for data centre development, Ballad recommends implementing the following strategic actions:

1. **Proactively Market to Target Data Centre Companies**
   Develop and deploy a targeted investment attraction campaign directed at listed data centre companies. The investment package should clearly showcase the Town's readiness and advantages, including:
   - Available land parcels suitable for data centre development
   - Existing data infrastructure and capacity
   - Current and potential electricity capacity
   - Local and regional labour availability
   - Applicable industry-specific grants and financial incentives
   - Key provincial and federal partners and their respective roles
   - Existing development initiatives

2. **Coordinate Land Expansion with Clearwater County**
   Initiate discussions with Clearwater County to explore annexation agreements or collaborative planning for future land use areas identified in the Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP). Securing additional industrial land will be critical for supporting data centre developments and future growth.

3. **Plan for Electrical Grid Capacity Expansion**
   Collaborate with Fortis to advance planning and implementation of required electrical infrastructure upgrades. While the current 30MW surplus may support a small-capacity data centre, scaling to 100MW will require additional transformers—potentially adding two to three years to the development timeline. Early coordination is essential to reduce delays.

4. **Strengthen Relationships with Key Provincial and Federal Partners**
   Engage actively with provincial and federal economic development and investment partners to ensure the Town remains a priority location for data centre investment opportunities. These partners often serve as conduits for national and international investors, and a strong relationship can significantly enhance the Town's visibility and competitiveness.

5. **Leverage Municipal Grants to Support Investment Activities**
   Apply for and utilize available municipal and regional grants to fund strategic investment attraction efforts. This may include foreign direct investment (FDI) initiatives, targeted marketing campaigns, and direct investor engagement activities.