

A DATA CENTER VOTE CANNOT REPAIR A DEFECTIVE PROCESS

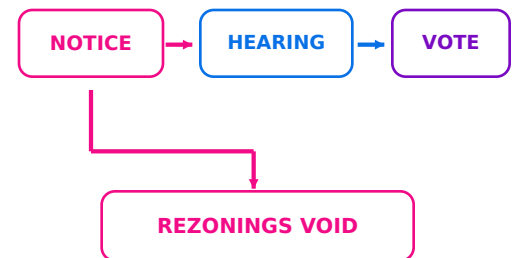
QTS and Compass Datacenters | Prince William Digital Gateway

Prince William County, Virginia, United States

REZONINGS VOID

Original zoning restored; future rezoning would start afresh

The fight concerned a rural and historic landscape near Manassas. The approvals fell on a more basic issue: legally adequate public notice.



PROCESS SHAPES DURABILITY

ANALYTICAL DIAGRAM

WHAT HAPPENED

Residents and preservation groups opposed the scale, landscape effects, noise and traffic. On March 31, an appellate ruling upheld invalidation over defective notice. Compass withdrew; QTS dropped its remaining appeal. The county subsequently confirmed that the rezonings were void and original zoning applied. The comprehensive plan change survives. The land is not permanently barred from a future application. [1-3]

EARLIER MOVES WORTH TESTING

- Postpone a hearing when notice is defective. Correct the process and allow proper public and staff review before asking for a binding decision.
- Examine the underlying site conflict separately. Test smaller footprints, relocation and credible limits on noise, traffic and landscape impacts.
- Distinguish compliance from consent. A procedurally sound hearing gives people their lawful opportunity to participate; it does not resolve every objection.

THE BUSINESS LESSON

A vote is only as durable as the process supporting it. Developers must manage procedural risk and the substantive case for the location as separate obligations.

Earlier moves are our assessment of plausible risk reduction, not proof they would have changed the outcome.

SOURCES

- 1 [Prince William County | Current project status](#)
- 2 [Virginia Court of Appeals | 31 Mar 2026](#)
- 3 [Data Center Dynamics | Compass withdrawal](#)