

University of Michigan Community Town Hall

Plans for a new scientific research computing center

October 1, 2026

What We Heard — and What We'll Address Tonight

At our Sept. 9 town hall, attendees shared important questions and concerns. **We listened, and we've updated tonight's presentation to respond to many of the issues raised last month.**

Some of the questions we'll address tonight:

Why is U-M building this research computing center?

Why was the Textile Road property selected?

Why partner with Los Alamos National Laboratory?

What will and will not happen at this facility?

What kind of environmental studies are being conducted?

What is the timeline for this project?

What noise levels should neighbors expect from this facility?

How is U-M planning to protect the Huron River and the environment?

How will the facility use water and energy and will it impact my utility rates?

Why Are We Building This Center?

Advanced computing is the **infrastructure of innovation** — similar in importance to laboratories, research hospitals, telescopes and experimental facilities.

U-M researchers are using advanced computing in a wide range of research areas, including:



Improving Medical Care



Strengthening the Power Grid



Accelerating Drug Discovery



Renewable Energy



But, to enable future breakthroughs,
**U-M needs to expand our computing
capacity and our collaborations.**



Why U-M Needs **More** Computing Capacity

U-M leads in research and innovation, but our computing infrastructure is **no longer keeping pace with peer universities like Illinois and UT Austin.**



Science has long relied on computing

For decades, U-M's North Campus computing center has supported research across many fields.



Current resources are limited

Existing computational resources are not enough to meet the growing needs of faculty and students.



More compute is essential

U-M needs more compute to remain a top research university and enable future breakthroughs.

How is it Different From a Commercial Data Center?

Our center is planned to be 1/20 the power capacity of “The Barn” at the start and 1/10 at full buildout

Saline Data Center “The Barn”



1.65M sq. ft.
initial facility size

U-M / Los Alamos Facility



0.24M sq. ft

A scientific research computing center dedicated to research in medicine, energy, climate science, engineering and national security.

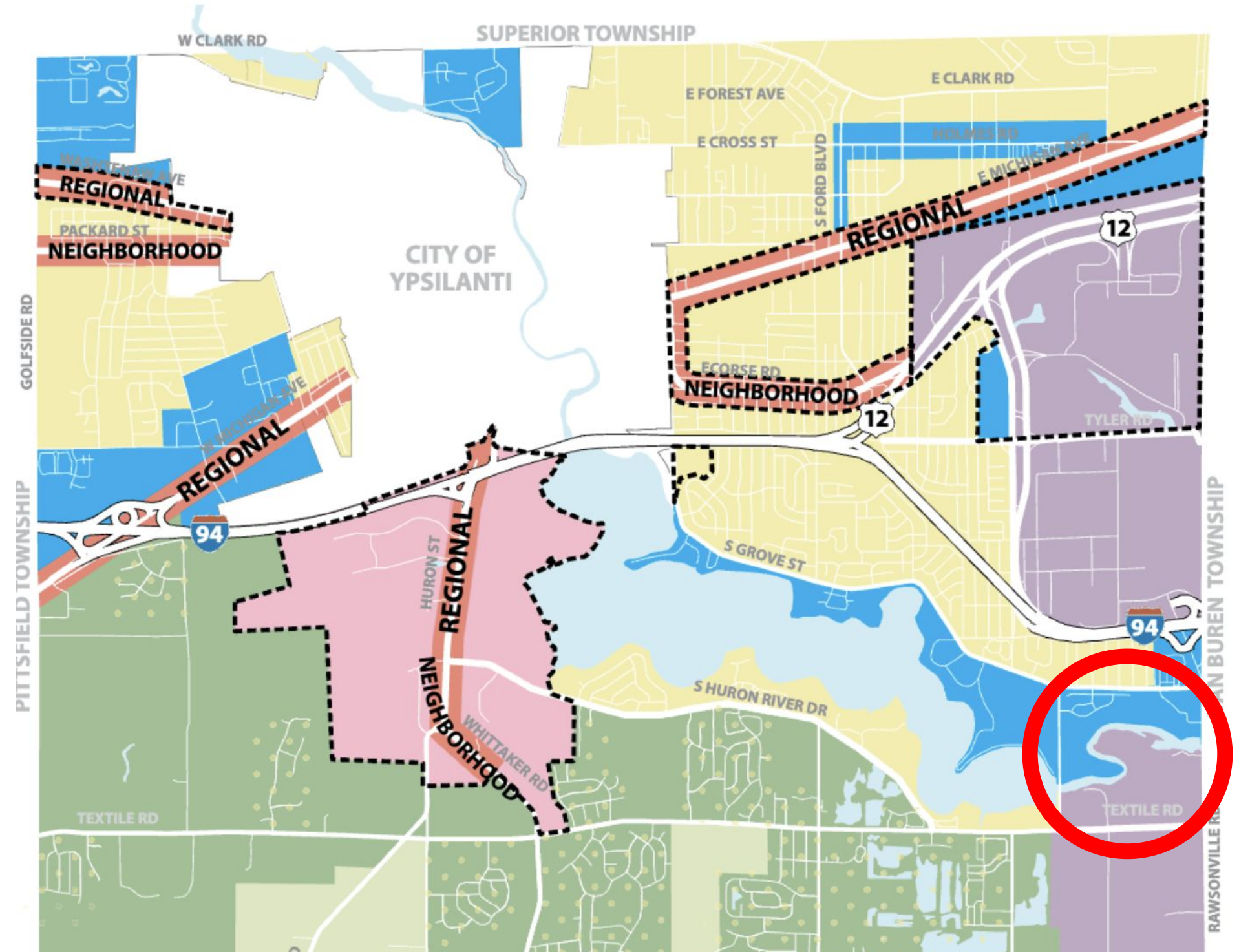
Not a commercial data center supporting streaming, social media or e-commerce.

Why Textile Road?

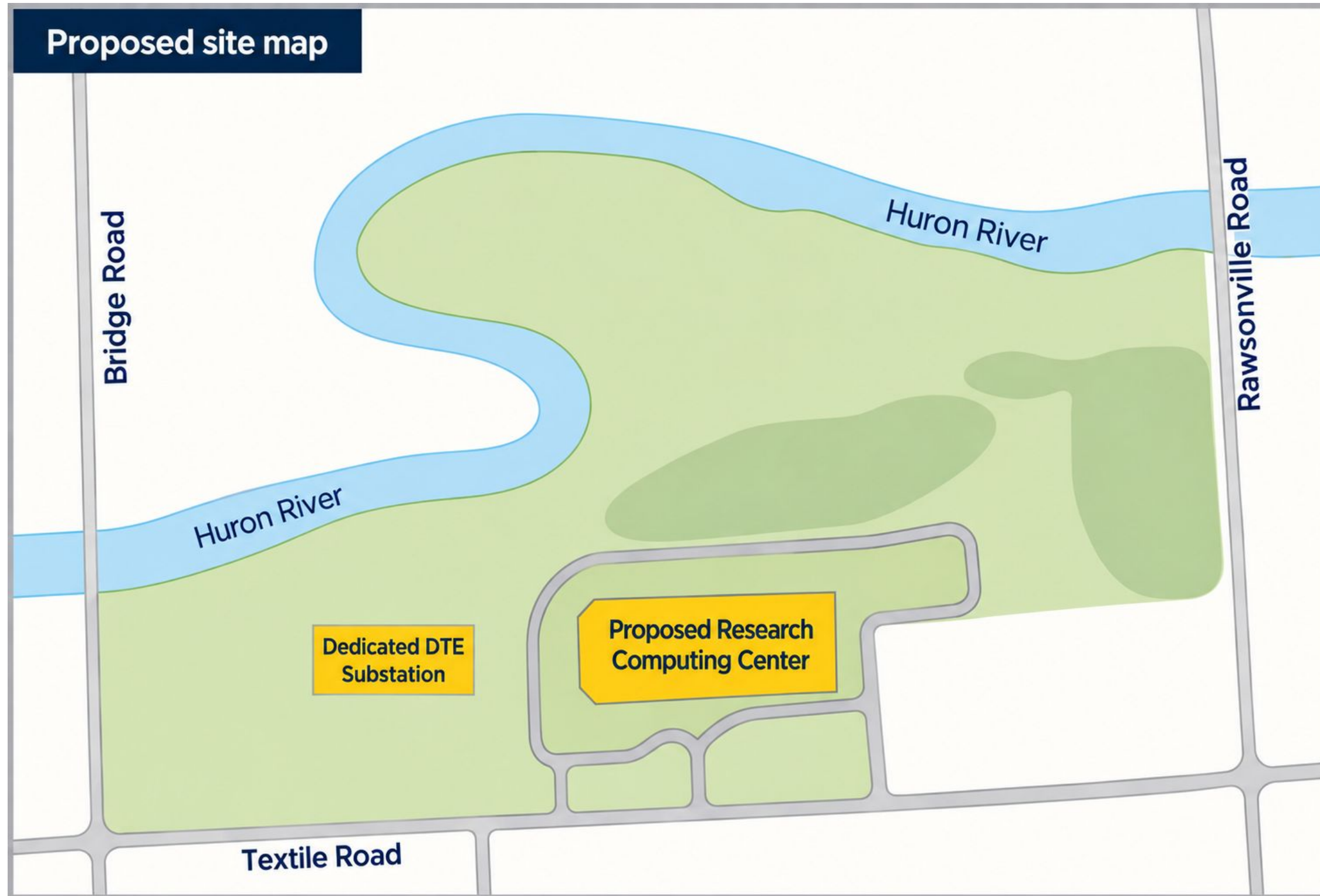
Ypsilanti Township 2040 Master Plan

INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT DISTRICT:

The Innovation and Employment District is intended to be the major employment area of the township. The area is targeted for companies at the cutting edge of innovation with a combination of technology, office, craft manufacturing or light industrial uses.



Site Zoned for Light Industrial Use



U-M + Los Alamos National Laboratory

A 50-year research relationship
across a wide range of scientific disciplines.

Notable collaborations include projects to:

Model chronic diseases
and improve drug
discovery

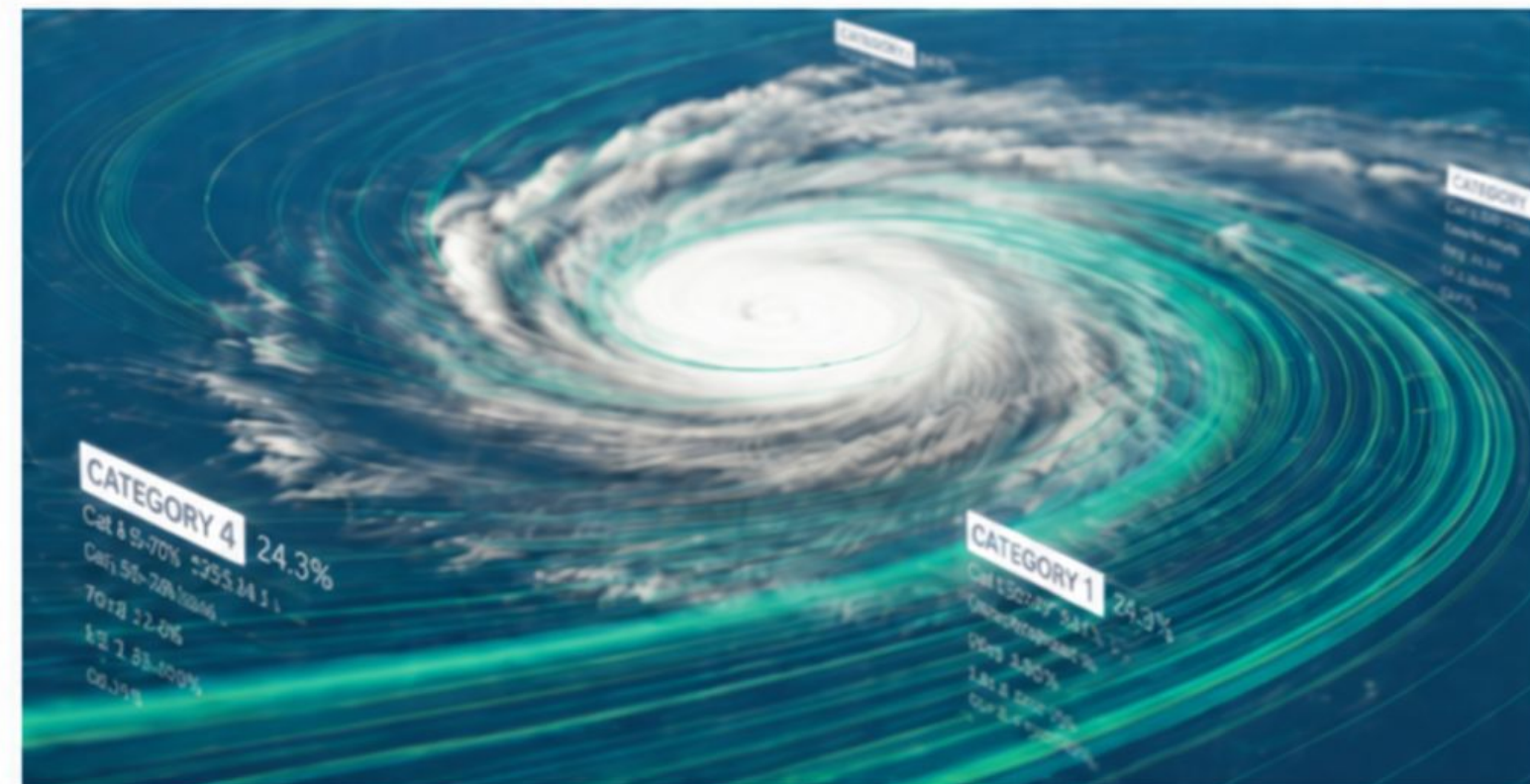
Study extreme weather
and polar ice sheet
breakups

Improve the resilience
and versatility of power
grids

Find alternatives
for clean energy

Make computers more
efficient and secure

Discover superconducting
materials used in
medical imaging



A Message from LANL Director Mason



Dear Ypsilanti Township residents and members of the broader community:

Over the past several months, some of you have raised concerns about the joint effort between Los Alamos National Laboratory and the University of Michigan to develop a high-performance computing research center. With this letter, I want to assure you that the proposal is for a research computing facility and address the questions about how we anticipate proceeding in Los Alamos' partnership with U-M.

*The full message can be found at
research.umich.edu/lanl-faq*

What LANL **will be doing**:

- Developing computing models for complex systems.
- Running sophisticated simulations.
- Analyzing massive datasets.
- Advancing their national security mission.

What LANL **will not be doing**:

- Not creating a military installation or weapons production facility.
- Not producing, using, or storing plutonium or other nuclear or hazardous materials at the facility.

What Will and Will Not Happen at the Facility?

This Facility **WILL**:

Advance research in medicine, cybersecurity, clean energy, engineering and national security

Create hundreds of jobs

Keep research and innovation talent in Michigan

Accelerate breakthroughs such as new drug discoveries and cancer treatments

This Facility **WILL NOT**:

Operate as a commercial data center

Increase local utility rates

Draw from the Huron River or local groundwater

Create smoke, odors or significant noise

Manufacture weapons or house nuclear materials

Key Project Milestones



Environmental Considerations

Over the coming months, we are studying:



Noise and
Vibration



Air Quality



Ecological
Resources



Historical &
Cultural Site
Impacts



Water/Wastewater
and Energy Use
Projections



Stormwater
and Water
Quality



Lighting and
Visual Quality



Temporary
Disturbance



Material
Management



Traffic



Community
Priorities

Noise Levels



Expected noise levels from the facility are about 40–50 decibels, comparable to mechanical equipment on U-M's campus.

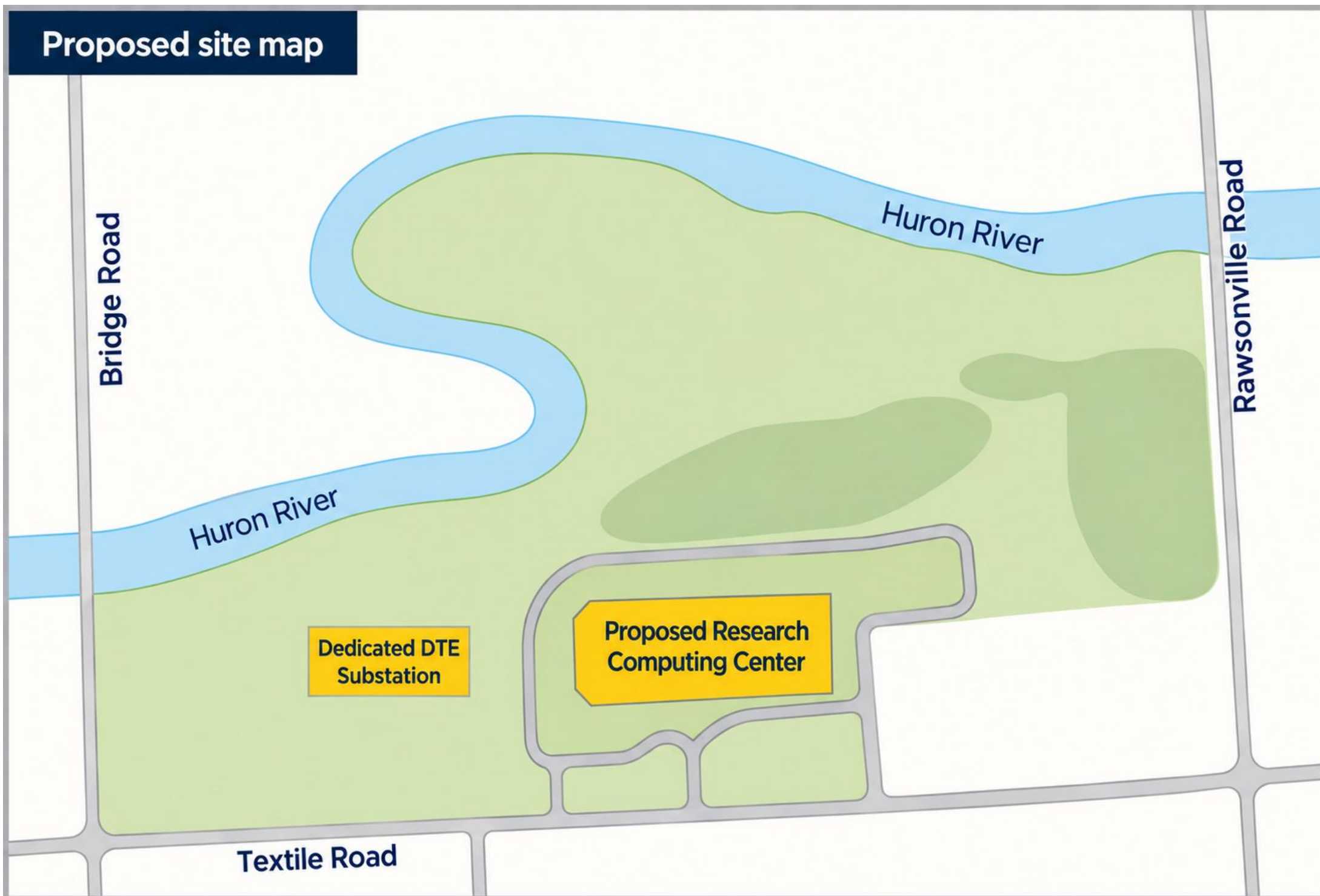


At 800–900 feet from the facility, noise levels are expected to be comparable to a quiet indoor conversation.



The facility will follow the same noise standards U-M uses on its Ann Arbor campus. Limits are set at 61 decibels during the day and 55 decibels overnight.

How is U-M Planning To Protect the Site's Natural Features?



- **Only about 25% of the site is planned to be developed** for the facility and substation, while about 75% of the site is planned to remain green space.
- **U-M is committed to responsible stewardship of the Huron River** and to maintaining the riverfront as undeveloped natural space.
- The center will be designed to blend into the surrounding area, with wetland protections subject to EGLE review and permitting.

The Huron River + Water Use



The facility **will NOT** draw water from or discharge **wastewater** into the Huron River.



We are evaluating **closed-loop cooling** and **open-loop reclaimed wastewater** to drastically reduce reliance on fresh municipal water.



Community feedback will help us finalize our design choices.

Electricity + DTE Substation



**U-M will build and pay for
a dedicated DTE substation.**



**The project will not impact
local electrical rates and reliability.**

We Are Hearing You

Your concerns are part of the work ahead.

● Water

● Electricity

● Environment

● Noise

● Transparency

● Community Engagement

U-M Responsible Development Pledge

We pledge to develop and operate the Research Computing Center responsibly, with protections for ratepayers, natural resources and local communities.



Pay our own
infrastructure costs



Protect the grid
and ratepayers



Protect water
and the environment



Support Michigan
jobs and communities

Public Q&A



PANELISTS:

Steven Ceccio, Project Lead

Rob Green, Project Director

Patricia Hurn, Interim Vice President for Research and Innovation

Chris Kolb, Vice President for Government Relations

Drew Smith, Interim Vice President of Finance

Khalil Rahal, DTE Director of Economic Development

MODERATOR:

Paul Corliss, AVP for Public Affairs & Communications



To hear from as many community members as possible, please limit your questions to the panel to **3 minutes**.



Microphone holders are located at the front of the room. Please limit each line to **3 community members** at a time.



Please email **hpc-center@umich.edu** with ideas and feedback.