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The Case for Visible Benefit

Social License and the Physical Infrastructure of Artificial Intelligence

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Author Note

Curtis Crimmins is a hotelier and real estate operator with more than twenty years in hospitality operations, spanning front-desk, concierge, general management, and area vice president roles across Marriott, Ritz-Carlton, Hilton, IHG, and Best Western, and Chief of Staff at OYO during its United States expansion. He has developed, financed, and operated hotel assets exceeding one hundred million dollars in value, and is the founder of Roomza, Inc., a hospitality data company. This paper is written in a personal capacity.

Disclosure. The author is founding an organization that would administer, deliver, and certify host-community benefits of the kind described in Sections 6 through 8. Adoption of the framework proposed here would benefit that organization, and the reader should weigh the argument accordingly. The framework is presented as a testable proposition, and the research agenda in Section 11 and the experimental design in Appendix A are offered in part so that others can evaluate the claim independently of the author's interest.

Acknowledgments. This paper began in conversations at the Primary Venture Summit in New York in September 2026. The author thanks the participants who disagreed with him; their objections shaped Sections 8 through 10. Errors are the author's alone.

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Abstract

Artificial intelligence is becoming a physical infrastructure industry. Data centers require land, electricity, transmission, cooling, water, and capital, and they visibly alter the communities in which they operate, while the benefits attributed to artificial intelligence remain diffuse, deferred, or invisible to the communities bearing those costs. This paper argues that the asymmetry produces a legibility gap: the costs of infrastructure are locally salient while its benefits are economically real but socially difficult to observe. Drawing on the political economy of concentrated costs and diffuse benefits, the social-license literature, facility-siting research on compensation and its limits, and behavioral findings on loss aversion and salience, the paper proposes visible benefit, or abundance, as a design principle: a condition in which a meaningful portion of the economic gain created by infrastructure is converted into benefits that are observable, attributable, usable, and additional for the population living alongside it. The argument is neither conventionally

redistributive nor philanthropic. Visible benefit is treated as productive infrastructure, and the paper hypothesizes, without claiming to have shown, that it lowers political risk, shortens entitlement, and creates constituencies with a stake in continued operation. The paper further argues that employment, the channel through which industrial facilities historically made their benefits legible, cannot carry the surplus of a facility as capital-intensive and labor-light as a data center; predicts that host communities will increasingly judge such projects by direct participation rather than job counts; and presents the Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend as a precedent. It closes with eight falsifiable hypotheses, a research agenda, and a pre-registered design for a first test.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, data centers, infrastructure siting, social license to operate, community benefit agreements, legibility, political economy, real estate

JEL codes: D72, H23, L86, Q48, R52

1. Introduction

This paper began, somewhat unexpectedly, at a venture capital conference. At the Primary Venture Summit in New York in September 2026, I spent much of a day discussing the collision between two industries I know to very different degrees. I am a hotelier and real estate operator by background: I have bought, sold, developed, financed, and operated buildings. More recently, like much of the technology industry, I have become interested in the extraordinary physical requirements of artificial intelligence. The convergence presents a question that arises at every scale, from a hyperscale campus on former farmland to a few megawatts in the basement of an existing building: the infrastructure creates value in a place, and the place bears the costs. What does the place get?

Most people I spoke with understood the commercial logic of the buildout quickly. The more interesting disagreement came afterward, when I suggested that some of the value should visibly reach the people who live with the project. If a facility generates substantial new income for its owner and operator, why should any portion pass to the neighbors? Why credit a utility bill? Why subsidize a rent, a room, or a broadband connection? And the sharpest version: if residents do not even know the infrastructure is there, why tell them?

These are economically rational questions. I believe they also reveal one of the larger strategic mistakes the artificial intelligence industry could make. The conventional financial answer is to maximize the share of newly created value captured by the owner of the

infrastructure and the owner of the underlying asset. The thesis of this paper is that this calculation is incomplete. Infrastructure exists within a political and social environment as well as an economic one. When the costs a system imposes are highly visible while its benefits are diffuse, indirect, or invisible, the system develops what I will call a legibility gap. The benefits may be perfectly real. That is not sufficient. In a democracy that permits, taxes, and regulates infrastructure locally, the benefits must sometimes also be seen.

The prescription can be stated in a sentence: sign the community benefit agreement early, index it to the project, and itemize it on the household's bill. The paper exists to explain why those three changes matter more than their modesty suggests, and it is worth being precise about how much of the explanation is borrowed. The legibility gap is a synthesis of Arnold's (1990) traceability and Mettler's (2011) submerged state, applied to privately built infrastructure rather than public policy; the instrument proposed in Section 8 is a community benefit agreement with three changes. What the paper adds is, first, the observation that employment, the channel through which industrial facilities historically made their benefits legible, is structurally too narrow for a facility as capital-intensive as a data center, which is the argument of Section 7 and the one the author regards as most novel; second, an operational test, four criteria that a benefit must pass, which turns the synthesis into something a regulator or lender can apply; and third, a set of hypotheses precise enough to fail. The commercial claim, Proposition 3, rests on analogy from wind farms, mining, and a sovereign fund until the experiment in Appendix A is fielded, and the paper says so wherever it appears.

The paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 describes the shift of artificial intelligence from software to physical infrastructure. Section 3 defines the legibility gap and states the paper's first proposition. Section 4 situates the argument in four literatures and in the current abundance debate. Section 5 offers two historical illustrations. Section 6 develops the visible abundance framework. Section 7 argues that employment, historically the channel through which large facilities made their benefits legible, is structurally too narrow for capital-intensive AI infrastructure, and presents the Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend as a precedent for routing a surplus around the wage channel. Section 8 introduces the participation dividend as the framework's operating mechanism. Section 9 treats social license as an economic asset, addresses the distribution question, and extends the argument beyond data centers. Section 10 takes up objections, including the risk that benefits are read as bribes. Section 11 proposes a research agenda, and Section 12 concludes.

2. From Digital Technology to Physical Infrastructure

For much of the consumer internet era, technological infrastructure was remarkably easy to ignore. Software seemed weightless. A person opened a laptop or a telephone and something happened. The data center, fiber route, electric substation, cooling plant, and physical supply chain that made the interaction possible remained elsewhere. "The cloud" ranks among the more successful abstractions in modern business language: it encouraged users to imagine computation as an atmospheric phenomenon rather than as work performed inside very large buildings connected to very large electrical systems. The abstraction was arguably a policy success as well as a commercial one, since infrastructure that no one perceives generates little opposition (see Scott, 1998, on legibility and governance).

Artificial intelligence is making the abstraction harder to sustain. The International Energy Agency (2025) projects global data-center electricity consumption of approximately 945 terawatt-hours by 2030, more than double 2024 levels, with artificial intelligence the largest driver of growth; in the United States, the agency expects data centers to account for nearly half of electricity-demand growth through the end of the decade. Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory's 2025 update for the U.S. Department of Energy estimates that data centers could account for 11.8 percent of total U.S. electricity by 2030 in its reference case, with sensitivity scenarios ranging from 9.5 to 15.3 percent, against 4.4 percent in 2023 (Smith et al., 2026; Shehabi et al., 2024). Whatever the precise figure proves to be, the direction is unambiguous. Artificial intelligence is acquiring mass. It needs generation, transmission, transformers, cooling, buildings, and land, and each of those requirements places the technology directly into the physical and political environment of particular communities.

That fundamentally changes the relationship between the technology industry and the public. An industry that once arrived as an app now arrives as a rezoning application, an interconnection request, and a line item on a rate case. The remainder of this paper concerns what follows from that change.

3. The Legibility Gap

Consider two effects of the same infrastructure project. A data center contributes several million dollars annually to a municipal tax base. At the same time, residents see transmission construction, hear discussion of water consumption, encounter diesel backup generators, worry about electricity prices, and read that artificial intelligence may disrupt their employment. Both sides of the ledger may be true simultaneously. The tax

contribution is real. So are the perceived costs. But they have very different levels of legibility. A household can see a construction site. A household can read an electric bill. A household understands a reservoir. A household generally cannot perceive its individual share of an increase in municipal assessed value. Table 1 sorts common costs and benefits by who perceives them, when, and how legibly.

Table 1

Household Legibility of Common Local Costs and Benefits of a Data Center

Item	Who perceives it	When	Household legibility
Transmission line or substation	Neighbors, drivers	Construction onward	High: physical, permanent
Monthly electricity bill	Every ratepayer	Every month	High: itemized, recurring
Diesel backup generators	Adjacent residents	Testing and outages	High: audible, visible
Water withdrawals	Residents, farmers	Drought and reporting cycles	Medium to high: reported locally
Construction traffic	Commuters	Build period only	High but temporary
Construction employment	Local trades, if hired	Build period only	Medium: visible, but crews are often nonlocal and leave when operation begins
Permanent operating jobs	A few dozen households	Ongoing	High for holders; near zero for everyone else
Indirect and induced jobs	Vendors, retail, hospitality	Lagged; ex post studies	Low: real but unrouted and unattributed
Municipal tax base growth	Finance office	Annual budget	Low: aggregate, unattributed
Regional GDP contribution	Economists	Ex post studies	Very low: statistical
Scientific and medical advances	Future patients	Years to decades	Very low: probabilistic, distant
Shareholder returns	Distant owners	Quarterly	Zero locally

Note. Legibility ratings are the author's judgments and are intended as illustrative rather than measured. The pattern, high legibility on the cost side and low on the benefit side, is the object of interest.

The paper treats this as a structural problem rather than a communications failure that better messaging can cure, and states it as its first proposition.

Proposition 1. *Infrastructure becomes politically vulnerable when its costs are concentrated and legible while its benefits are diffuse and illegible.*

The proposition should not be confused with a claim that every objection to infrastructure is economically justified. The issue is perception combined with distribution. Infrastructure developers routinely answer community concerns with aggregate measures: total investment, temporary construction employment, permanent employment, tax generation, secondary economic activity, and regional GDP contribution. These are legitimate measures. They are also abstract. A benefit can therefore be economically real and socially invisible, and that distinction matters.

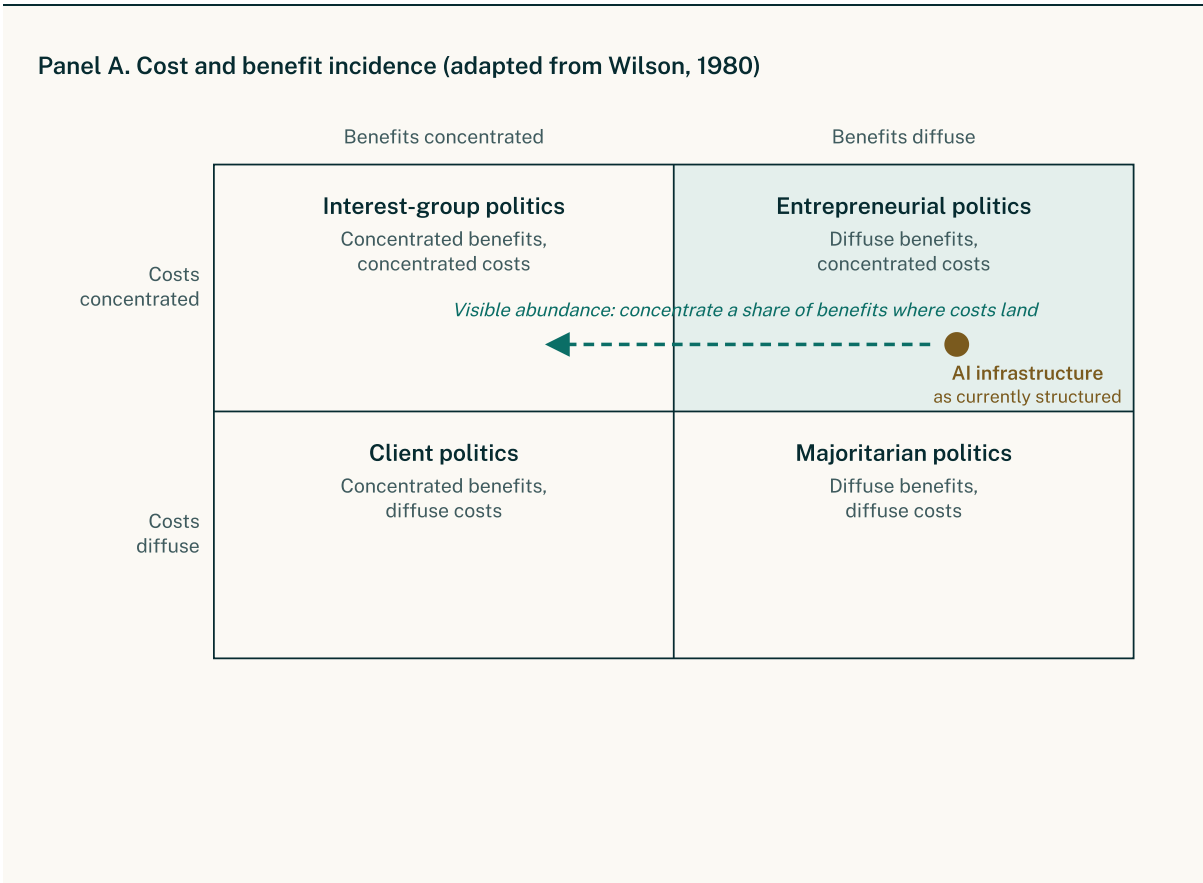
Recent public opinion evidence suggests the gap is already operating around artificial intelligence. Pew Research Center (2026), surveying 5,119 U.S. adults in February 2026, found that 40 percent expected artificial intelligence to have a negative effect on society over the next twenty years against 16 percent expecting a positive effect; 67 percent expressed little or no confidence in the federal government's ability to regulate the technology and 59 percent lacked confidence that U.S. companies would develop it responsibly. A June 2026 Reuters/Ipsos poll found that only about a third of Americans approved of the pace of data-center construction and only 14 percent would support a data center in their own community (Reuters, 2026). Polling by the AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research with the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago, released in September 2026, found nearly two-thirds of Americans extremely or very concerned about data centers' effect on energy prices and 57 percent about their effect on water supplies (Associated Press, 2026). On July 18, 2026, opponents held 142 coordinated protests across 42 states in a single day (Reuters, 2026).

Legislators have responded. On September 16, 2026, the U.S. House of Representatives voted 417 to 3 to direct state utility regulators to consider standards under which data centers pay the full cost of the new generation and transmission needed to serve them (Associated Press, 2026). New York imposed a one-year moratorium on data centers above 50 megawatts and then published a framework recommending community investment of at least one million dollars per megawatt of utility demand (New York State, 2026). Pennsylvania removed data centers from its fast-track permitting program, barred nondisclosure agreements with state agencies, and conditioned permits on local approval (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 2026). Data Center Watch counted at least 48 projects

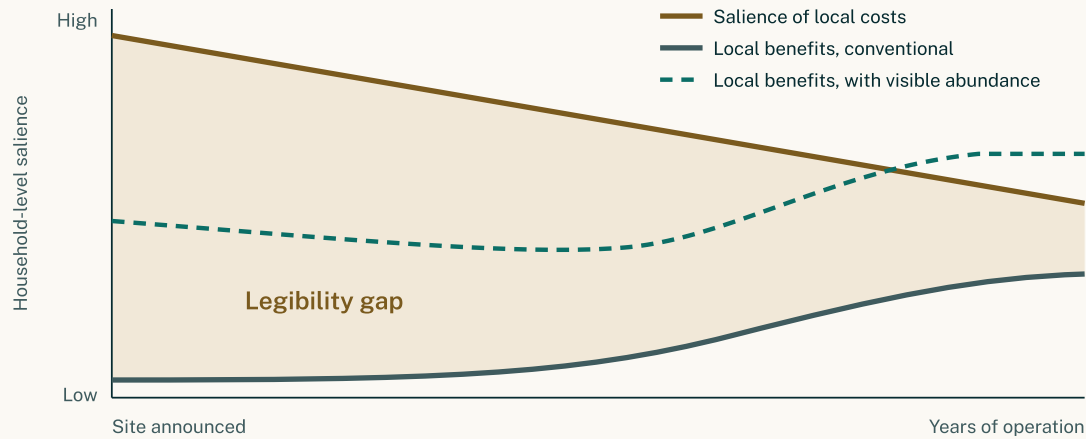
worth roughly 156 billion dollars blocked or delayed by local opposition in 2025 and a further 75 projects worth about 130 billion dollars in the first quarter of 2026 alone, the largest quarter on record (Fortune, 2026; Newsweek, 2026). One should be careful about extrapolating from individual polls or legislative actions. Still, the signal is difficult to miss: the physical infrastructure of artificial intelligence has become politically salient, and it has become salient on the cost side first.

Figure 1 presents the legibility gap as a graphical model. Panel A adapts Wilson's (1980) typology of policy politics by the incidence of costs and benefits, placing AI infrastructure as currently structured in the quadrant of diffuse benefits and concentrated costs, the configuration Wilson associated with the most volatile politics. Panel B stylizes household-level salience over time: cost salience is high from the moment a site is announced and decays slowly, while conventional benefit salience begins near zero and rises late, if at all. The shaded region is the gap. Panel C states the diagnostic expression and names the four levers, developed in Section 6, that raise the benefit curve.

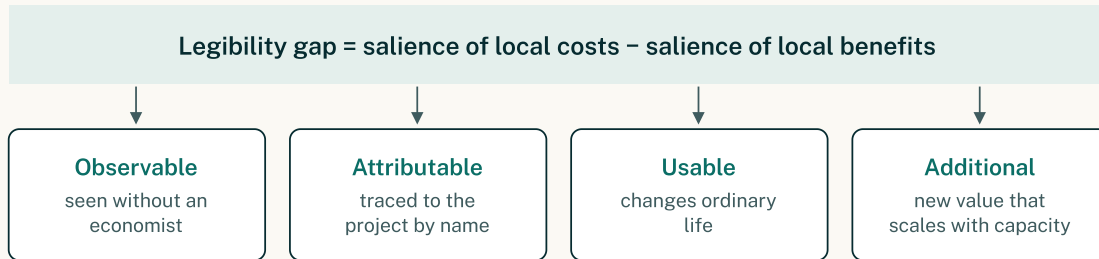
Figure 1
The Legibility Gap: A Graphical Model



Panel B. Salience over time at the household level (stylized)



Panel C. Diagnostic expression and the four levers that close the gap



Note. Panel A is adapted from Wilson (1980). Panel B is stylized and not drawn from data; the curves illustrate the ordering of salience, not its magnitude. The dashed line in Panel B shows the intended effect of the visible abundance levers in Panel C. The expression in Panel C is a diagnostic heuristic, not a proposed econometric specification.

4. Related Literature

The argument draws on four bodies of work that rarely cite one another. Bringing them into contact is part of the paper's contribution.

4.1 *Political economy of incidence*

Proposition 1 has a lineage. Olson (1965) showed that concentrated interests organize more readily than diffuse ones, which is why small groups bearing costs often defeat large groups receiving benefits. Wilson (1980) turned incidence into a typology: when benefits are diffuse and costs concentrated, policy survives only through what he called

entrepreneurial politics, in which someone must mobilize a public that individually gains little. Arnold (1990) added the concept of traceability, arguing that citizens punish or reward policy according to whether they can trace an outcome back through a causal chain to an identifiable decision; long chains dissolve accountability in both directions. The legibility gap is, in these terms, a traceability failure on the benefit side of a project sitting in Wilson's most difficult quadrant.

Mettler (2011) supplies the closest analogue. Her account of the "submerged state" documents how U.S. social benefits delivered invisibly, through the tax code or through private intermediaries, generate almost no political constituency, whereas benefits delivered visibly, such as Social Security, generate durable defenders. Pierson (1993) and Campbell (2003) develop the underlying mechanism as policy feedback: policies that make their beneficiaries aware of themselves as beneficiaries create the coalitions that sustain the policy. Visible abundance applies that mechanism to private infrastructure.

4.2 Social license to operate

The social-license literature emerged from mining and extractive industries facing precisely the incidence problem described above. Thomson and Boutilier (2011) define social license as the ongoing acceptance or approval of an operation by the local community and other stakeholders, distinct from and renewable more often than legal permission. Gunningham, Kagan, and Thornton (2004) show that firms routinely exceed regulatory requirements because the social license, enforced by neighbors, activists, and local officials, is more demanding than the legal one. Prno and Slocombe (2012) trace the concept's origins to governance and sustainability theory, and Moffat and Zhang (2014) model its acquisition empirically, finding that procedural fairness and perceived contact quality drive trust more than the scale of economic contribution. The last finding matters here: it implies that how a benefit is delivered can matter as much as how large it is.

4.3 Facility siting and the compensation problem

Siting research offers the most direct precedent and the most important warning. O'Hare (1977) argued early that compensation to host communities is the strategically decisive variable in siting locally unwanted facilities. Kunreuther, Fitzgerald, and Aarts (1993) tested a "facility siting credo" and found that acceptance depended on the process being seen as fair and the facility as safe before compensation had any effect. Wolsink (2007), studying wind power, found that opposition was driven less by proximity than by perceptions of equity and fairness in how costs and benefits were distributed. Devine-

Wright (2009) reframed NIMBY behavior as place-protective action rooted in place attachment, implying that benefits which strengthen a place will be received differently from benefits that merely pay for damage to it.

The warning comes from Frey and Oberholzer-Gee (1997). In a survey experiment on a proposed nuclear waste repository in Switzerland, they found that offering monetary compensation reduced local acceptance from 50.8 percent to 24.6 percent: the payment crowded out civic motivation and signaled that the facility was dangerous enough to require a bribe. Cass, Walker, and Devine-Wright (2010) document the same dynamic in UK renewable energy, where community benefit funds were variously interpreted by residents as good neighborliness, public relations, or bribery, depending on framing and timing. Any proposal to share value with host communities has to answer this literature. Section 10 does so directly; the short version is that the visible abundance criteria of attribution and additionality are designed to distinguish participation in a surplus from compensation for a harm.

The same literature contains the most direct evidence that the form of a benefit, rather than its amount, moves acceptance. Warren and McFadyen (2010) compared attitudes toward a community-owned wind farm on the Isle of Gigha with attitudes toward developer-owned wind farms on the adjacent Kintyre peninsula and found Gigha residents consistently more positive; the islanders had named their turbines. Musall and Kuik (2011) found the same pattern in southeast Germany, where neighbors of a community co-owned wind park held markedly more favorable attitudes than neighbors of a commercially owned one. Most usefully, Hogan, Warren, Simpson, and McCauley (2022), surveying 318 residents across three Scottish communities, compared full community ownership, shared ownership through a co-operative, and a conventional community benefit fund paid by a for-profit developer. Residents in the two ownership communities reported greater support, greater involvement, and benefits they perceived as more fairly distributed than residents near the benefit-fund project, and a co-operative achieved acceptance comparable to full community ownership. Kunreuther and Easterling (1996), reviewing hazardous-facility siting, reached a complementary conclusion: compensation has limited effect until risk concerns are addressed, and in-kind benefits are received more favorably than cash. Read together, these findings suggest the crowding-out result is bounded, and that the boundary runs along the distinctions the framework draws: participation rather than payment, in-kind and usable rather than cash for harm, and productive facility rather than hazard.

4.4 Behavioral foundations

Two behavioral regularities underlie the gap. Prospect theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979) establishes that losses loom larger than equivalent gains, so a visible cost weighs more than a benefit of the same expected value even when both are perceived. The availability heuristic (Tversky & Kahneman, 1973) and the psychometric research on risk perception (Slovic, 1987) explain why a substation and a generator, which are vivid and locally observed, dominate an abstract tax contribution in judgment. Together these findings suggest that an infrastructure project is unlikely to close the gap by producing more aggregate benefit, and that changing the form in which benefit arrives is the more promising lever. That is a hypothesis rather than a result. It is the premise the rest of the paper builds on and the one the research agenda is designed to test.

4.5 The abundance agenda

The paper's title borrows deliberately from Klein and Thompson (2025), whose *Abundance* argues that the binding constraint on American prosperity has become the inability to build: housing, energy, transmission, and the physical systems on which growth depends, blocked by procedural veto points accumulated over decades. This paper accepts that diagnosis and takes up a question it leaves largely open. What happens to the politics of building when the thing being built is a data center, which produces enormous value, relatively little permanent local employment, and a bill that arrives before any benefit does? The blocked and delayed projects counted in Section 3 are failures to build in exactly Klein and Thompson's sense, and they are occurring in places where the case for building is strong. The legibility gap is offered as one account of why, and visible abundance as the condition under which abundance in their sense remains politically permitted. The relationship is one of extension. Their argument concerns the supply of things; this one concerns whether the people who host the supply can see their share of it.

5. Two Historical Illustrations

Historical analogies are dangerous precisely because they are irresistible. Rome did not survive because it constructed amphitheaters, and France did not experience a revolution because Versailles had too many mirrors. The two cases are offered as illustrations of a narrower question: how have durable systems made their presence and their benefits legible to the populations living within them?

5.1 Rome: the legible transaction

Roman authority had a physical vocabulary. In a provincial town such as Londinium, imperial power originated thousands of kilometers away, yet the forum, the baths, the amphitheater, and the roads made it difficult to miss (London Museum, n.d.-a, n.d.-b). Much of that civic fabric was financed not by the imperial treasury but by local elites through the practice historians call euergetism, the subject of Veyne's (1990) foundational study: wealthy individuals funded buildings, festivals, and distributions, and in return their wealth became visible within civic life and earned them status and political capital (Horster, 2015; Zuiderhoek, 2024). Roman society was hierarchical and frequently brutal, and "bread and circuses" is too simple a description of a system that also relied on law, taxation, citizenship, and military power. The point is institutional rather than moral. Private wealth, civic status, and public benefit were visibly connected: the wealthy person's success produced something the citizen could walk through, bathe in, watch, or eat. The transaction was legible. No gladiators are required to transfer the lesson.

5.2 Versailles: the inverse

Versailles did not cause the French Revolution. It became one of its enduring symbols because political and economic inequality had acquired an architecture. Late eighteenth-century France suffered a fiscal crisis, institutional dysfunction, food shortages, and deep structural inequality, and the palace's own account notes that public opinion increasingly identified the crown with the crisis as reform repeatedly failed (Château de Versailles, n.d.). The palace turned concentrated wealth into stone and communicated abundance with great efficiency. Unfortunately for the monarchy, it also communicated where that abundance was concentrated. Both cases demonstrate the visibility of power, and together they show that visibility can carry two radically different messages: this system produces things I can use, or this system produces extraordinary things for somebody else. Architecture, infrastructure, and public space communicate distribution without publishing a single spreadsheet. That is relevant again.

6. A Framework for Visible Abundance

The artificial intelligence industry understandably describes its benefits in aggregate terms: productivity, scientific discovery, economic growth, medical advancement, new companies, national competitiveness. These benefits could be enormous. Many are also probabilistic or distributed over long periods. The local consequences of infrastructure arrive differently. A

transmission line is immediate. A power plant is local. Construction traffic is observable. Water consumption can become a municipal concern. A change in household electricity prices appears every month. Where the resulting gap becomes large, conventional economic benefits may prove insufficient to produce social consent, and the shortfall appears as zoning resistance, permitting delay, moratoria, ratepayer-protection statutes, litigation, electoral pressure, or demands for community benefit agreements. Developers may regard these effects as external political constraints. I propose treating them as part of infrastructure design.

Visible benefit is the deliberate conversion of some portion of the economic productivity created by infrastructure into benefits that the surrounding population can directly perceive and use. Not every public expenditure qualifies. For the concept to be meaningful, a benefit must satisfy four criteria, which Figure 2 presents as a sequential screen.

6.1 Observable

The recipient should be able to identify the benefit without an economist explaining an input-output model. A lower bill is observable. A renovated park is observable. Free broadband is observable. A line in a municipal comprehensive annual financial report is considerably less so.

6.2 Attributable

People should be able to understand why the benefit exists. If infrastructure creates the surplus funding an amenity, that relationship should be explicit. This reverses a common corporate instinct: companies frequently try to make controversial infrastructure less visible. Visible abundance argues that, where practical, infrastructure and benefit should instead be deliberately connected in the public mind. Attribution is also, as Section 10 argues, the principal defense against a benefit being read as a bribe.

6.3 Usable

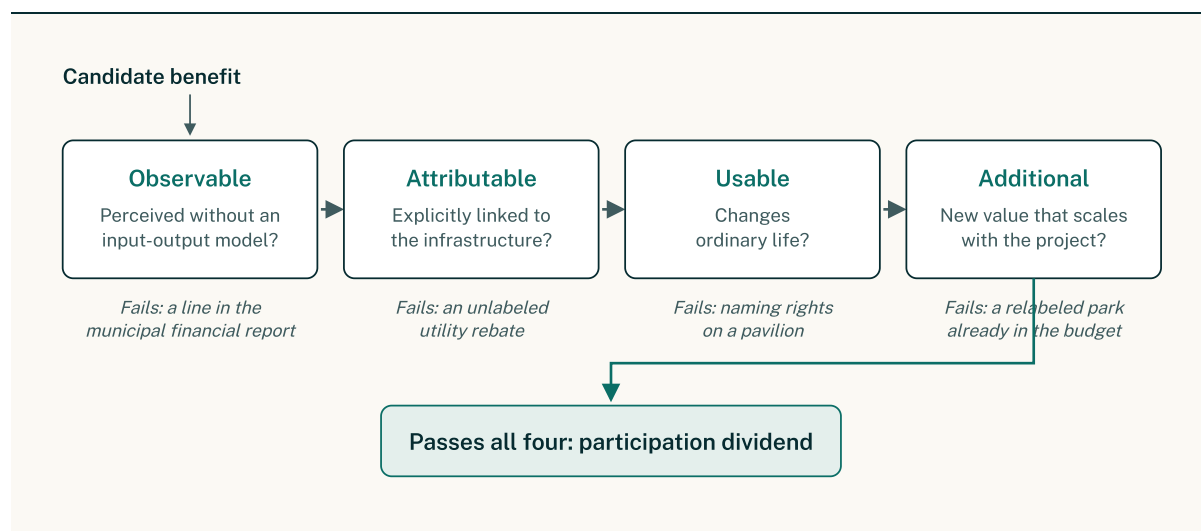
The benefit must affect ordinary life. This criterion separates visible abundance from ceremonial philanthropy. Naming rights are visible; they are not useful. A library with longer hours is useful. So is cheaper electricity, lower rent, or public transportation.

6.4 Additional

Visible abundance should represent value created by the underlying economics rather than the relabeling of an obligation that already existed. Replacing a previously planned municipal expenditure and attaching a corporate logo is communications. Creating a new benefit because a new economic engine exists is participation. Additionality carries a scaling requirement: because the benefit is defined as a share of value created, it should grow when the infrastructure grows, through a formula tied to a base that a third party can verify and that is difficult to manipulate, such as contracted capacity, rent, or revenue, rather than being fixed at the level that secured the first permit.

Figure 2

The Visible Abundance Screen



Note. A candidate benefit must pass all four gates to qualify as a participation dividend. The italicized examples beneath each gate are typical failures. The screen is intentionally technology-neutral and could be applied to energy generation, logistics, manufacturing, mining, or large-scale real estate development wherever benefits are broad and externalities are geographically concentrated.

7. From Employment to Participation

7.1 Employment as the original visible abundance

For most of the industrial era, a large facility did not need a community benefit agreement because it had a payroll. A mill employing two thousand people distributed its benefit to a majority of local households every pay period, with the company's name on the envelope.

Judged by the criteria of Section 6, employment was close to a perfect participation dividend: observable, attributable, usable, and scaled with the plant. The reflex among local officials to ask first about jobs is not naivety. For a century, employment was the delivery mechanism through which a facility's abundance became legible, and the vocabulary of jobs encodes that history.

7.2 Capital intensity and the shift to diffuse benefits

Artificial intelligence infrastructure breaks the mechanism through its factor proportions rather than through any failure of intent. A hyperscale data center represents on the order of a billion dollars or more of capital per building and supports a permanent operating staff measured in dozens. Good Jobs First examined eleven data center subsidy deals of fifty million dollars or more, which together delivered more than two billion dollars in public support for 1,174 permanent jobs, an average of 1.95 million dollars per job and, in the most extreme case, 6.4 million dollars per job (Tarczyska, 2016). The same report found that data centers purchase few goods or services from local businesses and that many of the best operating positions are filled by employees transferred in from elsewhere. When payroll is that thin relative to value created, the wage channel cannot carry the surplus to the surrounding population, no matter how well the facility is run. Developers respond by reporting indirect and induced employment: contractors, vendors, and the retail, hospitality, landscaping, and service jobs supported by their spending. Those effects are real. But they arrive through the long causal chain of Figure 3, lagged, statistical, and unattributed, and Table 1 places them accordingly. The employment frame does not fail because jobs have stopped mattering. It fails because, applied to a capital-intensive facility, it becomes dependent on indirect, diffuse, and weakly attributable benefits, which is the delivery mode the legibility gap is made of.

Construction employment deserves a separate word. Build-phase jobs are real income and often the most visible benefit a community receives, but they are temporary, frequently filled by traveling specialty crews, and they end at the moment the facility begins producing value. A community that measures benefit in construction jobs watches the benefit leave as the operation arrives. That sequence, a promise of jobs followed by the departure of the crews, recurs in siting disputes often enough to have become a stock grievance, and it teaches residents to discount the next promise.

This leads to a prediction, stated as the paper's second proposition.

Proposition 2. *As the ratio of capital to labor in large facilities rises, employment ceases to be a sufficient channel for distributing local benefit, and host communities will increasingly evaluate projects by direct participation in the surplus rather than by job counts. Artificial intelligence infrastructure, among the most capital-intensive and labor-light facility classes being built at scale, should exhibit this shift early and sharply.*

The proposition reframes the problem for the industry. The declining effectiveness of job-based arguments is consistent with a facility whose permanent payroll reaches relatively few local households. Something else must carry the benefit, and the remainder of the paper concerns what that something else should be.

7.3 A precedent: the Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend

The transition from employment to participation has already occurred at least once, in an industry with similar factor proportions. Oil extraction is capital-intensive and labor-light: a producing field generates enormous value with a small permanent workforce, and its indirect employment is largely statistical to the average resident. Alaska's response, adopted by constitutional amendment in 1976 and first paid in 1982, was to route a share of the surplus around the wage channel entirely. At least a quarter of the state's mineral royalties are deposited in the Alaska Permanent Fund, and a portion of the fund's earnings is distributed each year as a dividend to every eligible resident (Alaska Department of Revenue, n.d.; Goldsmith, 2002). Annual payments have ranged from a few hundred dollars to more than three thousand dollars per person.

Judged by the criteria of Section 6, the dividend is close to a pure participation dividend. It is observable: a deposit arrives on a known date each autumn. It is attributable: the program carries the resource's name in everyday speech and is understood statewide as oil money. It is usable: it is unrestricted cash. And it is additional and scaling: it is funded from a defined share of the resource surplus and rises and falls with the fund. Two further features bear on the argument here. First, the dividend created a constituency. Widerquist and Howard (2012) document its political durability: proposals to reduce or divert it have been among the most contested acts in Alaskan politics, and legislatures of both parties have treated it as close to untouchable. Residents defend the dividend not because of induced service jobs but because they can name what they receive; whether that support extends to the industry that feeds the fund is a further question the evidence reviewed here does not settle. Second, the feared labor-market cost did not materialize. Jones and

Marinescu (2022) find no reduction in aggregate employment attributable to the dividend, with a modest increase in part-time work, which speaks to the objection that an unconditional local benefit will discourage work.

The Alaska case is not a template. It is a state-level sovereign program funded from public resource royalties, and the mechanism proposed in Section 8 is private and contractual. But it supports the central empirical point of this section. When a capital-intensive facility cannot distribute its benefit through payroll, converting a defined share of the surplus into a visible, attributable, scaling household benefit has worked at least once, at state scale, and in that case the arrangement produced a durable constituency around the distribution of resource income. Whether a private, contractual dividend at facility scale does the same is untested.

8. From Community Benefit to Participation Dividend

Traditional community benefit agreements arise late in the development process. A project encounters opposition, negotiations begin, a developer promises infrastructure improvements or community spending, and the agreement becomes part of the price of consent. There is nothing inherently wrong with this model, and the siting literature suggests it often works (O'Hare, 1977; Kunreuther et al., 1993). But it arrives after the legibility gap has already been priced into the politics. Visible abundance suggests a more ambitious approach: public participation designed into the economics before opposition requires it. Call this a participation dividend. Candidly, it is a community benefit agreement with three changes. It is agreed before opposition forms rather than as the price of ending it. It is funded by a formula that scales with the project rather than a negotiated lump sum. And it is delivered in a form the household can attribute to the project at the point where it already perceives the cost. The novelty is in those three changes, not in the instrument, and the paper does not claim otherwise. The Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend described in Section 7.3 is the closest public analogue; the mechanism proposed here is its private, contractual counterpart.

The form varies by asset. Table 2 sets out candidate dividends by asset class and the observable form each would take. In a residential building, infrastructure income might subsidize utilities, broadband, common amenities, or some component of occupancy cost. In hospitality, it might reduce room rates during periods of excess inventory, fund complimentary services, or open amenities to the neighborhood. At utility scale, it might

finance household rate relief, grid resilience, or public charging. At municipal scale, it might support parks, schools, transportation, or housing. The precise mechanism should be determined empirically and locally; the principle is more important than the instrument.

Table 2

Candidate Participation Dividends by Asset Class

Asset class	Infrastructure revenue source	Candidate participation dividend	Observable form
Multifamily residential	Lease of basement, roof, or parking capacity for distributed compute	Utility credit; building-wide broadband; rent credit	Line on monthly statement labeled with the project
Hospitality	Lease of ballroom, service floor, or back-of-house space	Reduced room rates during low occupancy; free parking or transit; community access to amenities	Rate visible at booking; signage at check-in
Office and retail	Tenant-improvement conversion of vacant floors	Tenant broadband; shared EV charging; extended-hours public space	Building-level notice; charging kiosks
Utility-scale campus	Large-load tariff surplus; host-community agreement	Residential rate relief; grid resilience fund; public charging	Bill credit itemized by program
Public buildings	Lease of surplus municipal capacity	Library hours; school connectivity; cooling centers	Posted schedule tied to project revenue
Any host site	Operating budget (maintenance, landscaping, security, catering)	Local procurement covenant routing induced spend through named neighborhood vendors	Published annual local-spend report; vendor contracts carry the project name

Note. Examples are illustrative. The observable form is the design variable that distinguishes a participation dividend from an ordinary community benefit: the benefit is engineered to be seen at the moment and place where the household already encounters the cost.

A note on the economic base is needed before any arithmetic. The framework does not prescribe what the dividend is a share of. Surplus is used throughout in the ordinary sense of value the project creates above its costs, and the operative base in a given agreement could be gross revenue, contracted megawatts, net operating income, or a tariff differential, chosen for verifiability and resistance to manipulation, as Section 6.4 requires. The five percent of gross infrastructure revenue used in the example below is illustrative only. It is not a claim that gross revenue equals surplus, and the appropriate share of any base is among the questions Section 11 leaves to evidence.

A worked example clarifies scale. Consider a utility-scale campus of 100 megawatts, representative of the large projects at issue in many current siting disputes. Using an illustrative gross-revenue assumption of 1.2 million dollars per megawatt-year, the campus produces 120 million dollars annually; a five percent dividend of six million dollars funds a 15-dollar monthly credit to about 33,000 nearby households, itemized on the bill under the project's name, every month for the life of the facility. For comparison, New York State's (2026) framework recommends at least one million dollars per megawatt of utility demand, which for the campus implies 100 million dollars negotiated after a year of moratorium. The figures are not directly comparable: the New York benchmark is expressed as a project-level investment requirement, while the illustrative dividend is recurring over the operating life of the facility. The same arithmetic scales down: a two-megawatt installation in an existing building would route roughly 120,000 dollars a year, enough for building-wide broadband or a utility credit for a block, subject to the feasibility questions noted in Section 10. Both the revenue and the share are placeholders; the point of the example is the order of magnitude and the form of delivery, not the figures. The dividend need not involve a majority of the economics, or even a particularly large share. The claim, stated as the paper's third proposition, is about the marginal dollar.

Proposition 3. *The marginal dollar allocated to a visible, attributable, usable, and additional local benefit produces more strategic value to an infrastructure project than the marginal dollar retained, up to a threshold that varies by site and that should be estimated empirically.*

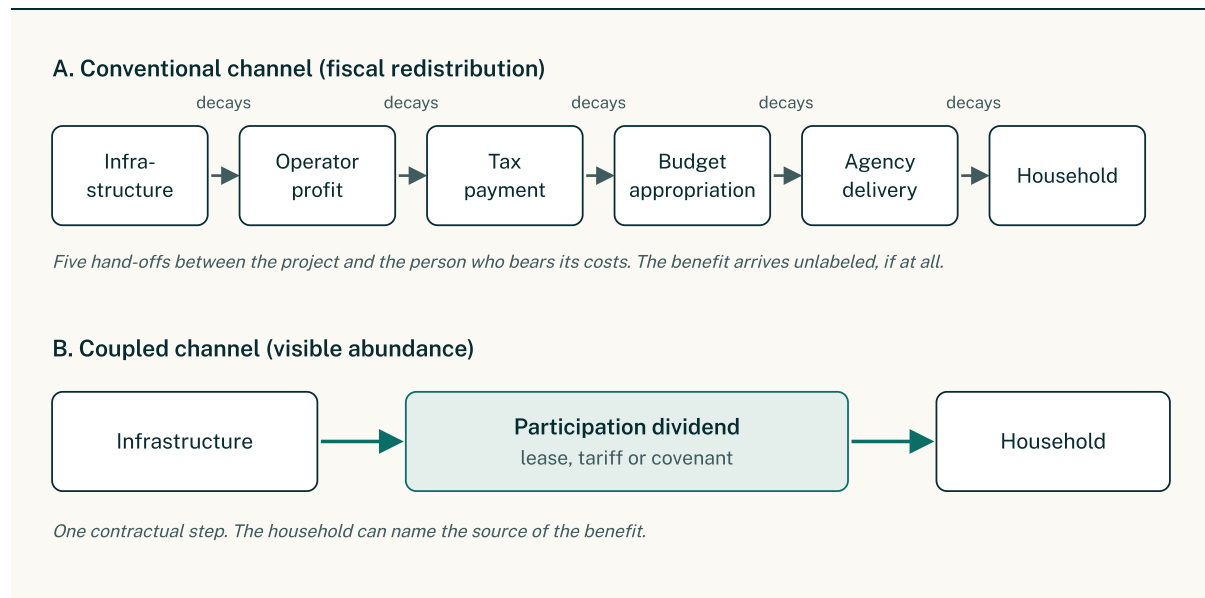
Proposition 3 is stated as a conjecture, and the paper does not claim to have tested it. What can be said is this. The cost side is documented: the Data Center Watch counts in Section 3 put the capital blocked or delayed by local opposition at 156 billion dollars in 2025 and 130 billion dollars in the first quarter of 2026, which is the magnitude against which any dividend is to be compared. On the benefit side the closest evidence is indirect. The wind-energy ownership studies reviewed in Section 4.3 find that the form of a benefit, participation rather than a benefit fund, moves acceptance independently of its size (Warren & McFadyen, 2010; Musall & Kuik, 2011; Hogan et al., 2022); Moffat and Zhang (2014) find that fairness and contact quality predict trust in mining better than the scale of economic contribution; and the Alaska case shows that an attributable, scaling benefit can produce a constituency that lasts decades. None of this is a test of Proposition 3 for artificial intelligence infrastructure. H1 through H5 in Section 11 are.

Figure 3 illustrates the mechanism by which coupling is expected to matter independently of the amount. Under the conventional fiscal channel, value created by infrastructure reaches a household only after passing through operator profit, tax payment, budget

appropriation, and agency delivery. Each hand-off is a point at which attribution decays, in Arnold's (1990) terms a link in a traceability chain that most citizens will not follow. Under the coupled channel, the dividend is a single contractual step and the household can name its source.

Figure 3

Causal Chain Length and Attribution: Conventional Versus Coupled Delivery



Note. The number of hand-offs in Panel A is illustrative; actual fiscal chains vary by jurisdiction. The point is qualitative: legibility declines with each intermediary between the project and the household.

9. Social License as an Economic Asset

9.1 Legitimacy as enabling infrastructure

The conventional interpretation of community benefit treats it as a cost. That assumption deserves scrutiny. Suppose two infrastructure developers have otherwise identical economics. Developer A retains essentially all incremental value. Developer B allocates a portion of project economics to locally visible benefits. Developer B may initially report lower direct project margins. It may also experience faster entitlement and permitting, lower political opposition, greater landlord participation, stronger municipal relationships,

higher consumer affinity, greater resilience against future regulation, and easier access to additional sites. If these effects are material, the apparent subsidy is partly an investment in deployment velocity.

The magnitude of the alternative is now observable. The Data Center Watch counts of blocked and delayed capital in Section 3 coincide with Moody's raising its 2026 capital-expenditure forecast for the six largest hyperscalers to 785 billion dollars (Fortune, 2026). Capital is accelerating into a permitting environment that is hardening. Against that backdrop, the paper proposes treating social license as economically similar to other enabling infrastructure. Companies invest in transmission because electricity cannot reach the facility without it, in networking because computation has limited value without connectivity, and in security because infrastructure cannot operate reliably without protection. It is worth asking why public legitimacy should be treated as free. It is not. It has simply gone unpriced in the project model.

9.2 The distribution question

The deepest question raised at the summit was not technological. It was distributive. Assume a parcel of land, or a previously underused part of a building, can suddenly generate substantial economic value because of demand for artificial intelligence infrastructure. Who owns that new productivity? Contract law provides one answer. The property owner owns the space; the infrastructure company owns its equipment; investors own their securities; customers purchase computation. That arrangement may completely describe the legal rights involved. It does not necessarily describe the most durable economic system.

The alternative proposition is that some portion of newly created productivity should strengthen the physical environment in which it is produced. That is not philanthropy. Philanthropy occurs after profits are created and asks what some owner of those profits should voluntarily give away. Visible abundance asks a different question during system design: what distribution of value makes the underlying system easier to build, expand, and defend? That is an infrastructure question, and it is the question the social-license literature has been asking of extractive industries for two decades (Thomson & Boutilier, 2011; Moffat & Zhang, 2014).

9.3 Why this matters beyond data centers

The question grows larger when considered against the possible trajectory of artificial intelligence. AI may substantially increase the productivity of capital, automate categories of human work, make certain goods and services dramatically cheaper, and create companies of extraordinary scale with relatively small workforces. None of this is certain, and its distribution is even less so. But if even part of that scenario develops, society could face a peculiar contradiction: greater aggregate abundance accompanied by weaker individual perception of participation in it. That is a dangerous configuration for any economic system, and it is the configuration Mettler (2011) identifies as corrosive to democratic support even when the underlying benefits are large.

The conventional response is redistribution through taxation, which will almost certainly remain part of public policy. Visible abundance offers a complementary mechanism. Instead of waiting for productivity to concentrate, taxing a portion of it, moving it through government, and eventually converting it into services, some benefits can be coupled directly to the infrastructure producing the new productivity. The shorter causal chain should improve legibility. AI infrastructure exists here; therefore this thing is cheaper, better, or available here. The causal connection is considerably easier for a household to identify. Alaska has run a version of this experiment for four decades with oil, and the result is a population that can name what the resource pays them and defends that distribution accordingly.

10. Objections and Limitations

Several limitations deserve acknowledgment, and one objection deserves a direct answer.

Benefits are not a license for harm. Visible abundance cannot compensate for infrastructure that is harmful on its own terms. A public park does not justify unsafe pollution; a subsidized rent does not excuse grid instability. The siting literature is unambiguous that compensation has no effect until a facility is perceived as safe and the process as fair (Kunreuther et al., 1993). Visible benefits should accompany responsible infrastructure, not purchase permission for irresponsible infrastructure.

The bribe objection. The strongest empirical challenge to this paper is Frey and Oberholzer-Gee's (1997) finding that offering compensation halved acceptance of a nuclear waste site, and Cass et al.'s (2010) documentation of community benefits read as bribes. Three features of the framework respond. First, the framework applies to a productive facility rather than a hazardous one; the crowding-out effect was strongest where the payment signaled danger. Second, attribution and additionality reframe the transfer as a

share of a surplus rather than a price for accepting a harm; Cass et al. found that residents distinguished sharply between "good neighbor" provision tied to a project's success and payments that arrived at the moment of a contested decision. Third, timing matters: a dividend written into the lease before opposition forms is categorically different from a check offered at a hearing. The ownership studies reviewed in Section 4.3 (Warren & McFadyen, 2010; Musall & Kuik, 2011; Hogan et al., 2022) and Kunreuther and Easterling's (1996) findings on in-kind compensation bear on all three features, but none was conducted on a data center. Whether the features are sufficient is an empirical question, stated as H4 in Section 11, and the paper does not assume the answer.

Physical and electrical feasibility. The distributed case assumes that existing buildings can host compute at scales that matter, and that assumption is not established here. Power density, cooling and waste-heat rejection, acoustics, fire protection, insurance, and code compliance vary by building type, and a load of even one to two megawatts typically requires dedicated utility service and switchgear that many buildings lack. Building-hosted installations are edge-scale, in the hundreds of kilowatts to low megawatts; the utility-scale campus remains the dominant form and the one the paper's evidence concerns, which is why the framework is written to apply to both. The economics in Section 8 are conditional on feasibility that engineering, not this paper, must establish.

Example selection. The author's examples are drawn disproportionately from real estate and hospitality, the industries he knows best, and the disclosure in the author note should be read alongside them. Nothing in the criteria of Section 6 favors any particular benefit; a discounted room qualifies on the same terms as a utility credit or a library hour, and communities, not hosts, should choose.

Visibility can become theater. Roman benefaction contained considerable status competition and self-promotion (Veyne, 1990), and modern corporate philanthropy can do the same. The requirements that benefits be usable and additional exist to exclude naming rights, galas, and relabeled obligations from the category.

Communities are heterogeneous. There is no single community interest. Benefits valued by a landlord differ from those valued by tenants, municipal leaders, utility customers, or neighboring residents, and Devine-Wright (2009) shows that place attachment shapes which benefits are welcomed. Visible abundance programs should therefore be designed with local participation rather than imposed from headquarters.

The analogies are analogies. Roman civic benefaction arose within a radically different social and political order, and Versailles was one component of a complex revolutionary crisis. Neither proves the proposition advanced here. They illustrate an enduring question: how does a population perceive who benefits from a system of power and wealth?

The economic claims are unproven. The central business hypothesis is falsifiable. If allocating value to visible public benefit produces no measurable improvement in permitting, public support, customer behavior, landlord participation, or deployment speed, the commercial argument weakens and the paper reduces to a normative claim. That research should be done, and Section 11 says how.

11. Research Agenda

A serious visible-abundance framework should move beyond theory. Table 3 states eight testable hypotheses, the design most suited to each, and the literature in which each is anchored. They sit at the intersection of infrastructure finance, behavioral economics, political economy, urban planning, and real estate economics, and they are worth studying before trillions of dollars of infrastructure are built. Appendix A specifies a pre-registered survey experiment that tests H1, H2, and H4 together at a cost of roughly five thousand dollars; the author intends to field it before the next revision of this paper.

Table 3
Testable Hypotheses and Suggested Designs

H	Hypothesis	Design	Literature anchor
H1	Replacing aggregate economic messaging with a direct household benefit of equal fiscal value raises stated project acceptance.	Survey experiment; conjoint	Mettler (2011); Arnold (1990)
H2	Attribution has an effect independent of monetary value: a labeled benefit outperforms an unlabeled benefit of the same size.	Field experiment on utility statements	Mettler (2011); Cass et al. (2010)
H3	Recurring household benefits outperform equivalent one-time civic investments on acceptance and on durability of support.	Panel survey around siting decisions	Kahneman & Tversky (1979)
H4	Benefits framed as participation (a share of value created) are less likely to be perceived as bribes than benefits framed as compensation.	Vignette experiment	Frey & Oberholzer-Gee (1997); Cass et al. (2010)

H	Hypothesis	Design	Literature anchor
H5	Projects with visible-abundance covenants reach entitlement faster and face fewer moratoria than matched projects without them.	Difference-in-differences on permitting records	Gunningham et al. (2004); Kunreuther et al. (1993)
H6	Properties hosting distributed compute with an occupant dividend command a valuation or occupancy premium relative to hosts without one.	Hedonic analysis of transactions	Wolsink (2007)
H7	Residents who identify as beneficiaries rather than neighbors of infrastructure express higher place-attachment consistency with the project.	Mixed methods; place-identity scales	Devine-Wright (2009)
H8	Routing induced spending through a labeled local procurement covenant raises perceived job benefit among residents who do not hold project jobs, independent of the job count.	Survey experiment; vendor-level field pilot	Arnold (1990); Widerquist & Howard (2012)

Note. H4 is the hypothesis on which the framework most depends; a null or negative result would require substantial revision of Sections 6 and 8. The author invites collaboration on any of these designs and will make data from pilot benefit deliveries available to qualified researchers as they occur.

12. Conclusion

The artificial intelligence industry is preparing to build at extraordinary scale. The International Energy Agency (2025) expects worldwide data-center electricity consumption to more than double by 2030, and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory now models scenarios in which data centers consume a double-digit share of U.S. electricity by the end of the decade (Smith et al., 2026). This infrastructure will create economic value. It will also occupy land, consume resources, alter electricity systems, and become increasingly visible in ordinary communities. The industry therefore has an opportunity to decide what that visibility communicates.

One model is familiar. The infrastructure sits behind a fence. Economic returns flow primarily to asset owners, operators, and investors. Communities receive tax revenue, employment, and indirect effects. When opposition appears, developers explain the aggregate benefits more loudly. The evidence reviewed in Section 3 suggests that this model is encountering growing resistance in state legislatures and local permitting processes, with substantial proposed investment now blocked or delayed by local opposition.

There is another model. The infrastructure remains profitable; the owners and investors make money; the technology advances. But a deliberate portion of the new productivity becomes visible in the lives of the people living around it. Their electricity is cheaper. Their building is better. Their internet is faster. Their park gets built. Something exists on a Thursday that would not exist without the infrastructure down the street, and they know why.

Rome is not a blueprint for twenty-first-century infrastructure policy, and Versailles is not a prediction. Both are reminders that systems of enormous wealth and power inevitably communicate something about whom that wealth and power serve. Artificial intelligence will communicate the same thing. The servers may be hidden. The economics will not be. The industry can treat public benefit as a cost external to the core project model, or it can recognize visible participation as part of the infrastructure required to build at societal scale. The paper's hypothesis, stated in Proposition 3 and untested, is that the second approach could produce more durable companies, more deployable infrastructure, and a healthier relationship between technological progress and the people expected to live alongside it. It might not. The research agenda in Section 11 and the design in Appendix A are offered so that the question is settled by evidence rather than by the author's conviction.

The goal should therefore be larger than abundance in the sense Klein and Thompson (2025) have made current. It should be abundance that can be seen, understood, and used. If artificial intelligence is going to consume more of the physical world, the people who live in that world should be able to see what they are getting in return.

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Appendix A. A First Test: Pre-Registered Survey Experiment for H1, H2, and H4

A.1 Purpose

The experiment holds the total economic value of a hypothetical data center constant and varies only the form in which that value reaches households. It tests whether form alone moves acceptance (H1), whether an explicit source label has an effect independent of value (H2), and whether participation framing outperforms compensation framing when value, channel, and label are held constant (H4), while providing a check on whether compensation framing reproduces the crowding-out reported by Frey and Oberholzer-Gee (1997).

A.2 Design

Between-subjects, five arms, random assignment. Target $n = 1,500$ U.S. adults, 300 per arm, which provides 80 percent power to detect a standardized difference of about 0.23 between any two arms at $\alpha = .05$, two-tailed. Respondents are recruited through a self-serve panel (Prolific or CloudResearch Connect) with quotas on census region and urbanicity, and pass an attention check and a comprehension check on the vignette before treatment.

Hypotheses, contrasts, and exclusion rules are pre-registered on OSF or AsPredicted before fielding. Estimated cost is 5,000 to 6,000 dollars including platform fees at a median completion time of six minutes; field time is two weeks.

A.3 Common vignette (all arms)

A company has proposed building a 100-megawatt data center in the county where you live. It would occupy about 60 acres of land currently zoned for industrial use, connect to the regional grid through a new substation, and use diesel generators for backup power. Construction would take about two years and employ roughly 800 workers, most from outside the county. Once operating, the facility would employ about 50 permanent staff. The county's consultants estimate that the facility would generate about 6 million dollars per year in local economic benefit for as long as it operates.

A.4 Treatment text (one paragraph appended per arm)

- **Arm A, aggregate (control).** "That 6 million dollars per year would take the form of additional property-tax revenue available for the county's general budget."
- **Arm B, direct, generic label.** "That 6 million dollars per year would be distributed to the county's roughly 33,000 households as a credit of about 15 dollars per month on residential electric bills. The credit would appear on each household's bill as a line item labeled Rate Adjustment."
- **Arm C, direct, source label.** Identical to Arm B except that the final sentence reads: "The credit would appear on each household's bill as a line item labeled Data Center Community Dividend."
- **Arm D, compensation framing.** "That 6 million dollars per year would be distributed to the county's roughly 33,000 households as a credit of about 15 dollars per month on residential electric bills, provided as compensation for the burdens of hosting the facility. The credit would appear on each household's bill as a line item labeled Data Center Community Dividend."

- **Arm E, participation framing.** "That 6 million dollars per year would be distributed to the county's roughly 33,000 households as a credit of about 15 dollars per month on residential electric bills, provided as the community's share of the value the facility creates. The credit would appear on each household's bill as a line item labeled Data Center Community Dividend."

Arms B through E deliver identical expected value per household through the same channel, a monthly bill credit of the same size for the life of the facility. Arm C differs from Arm B only in the source label on the bill; Arms D and E are identical to Arm C except for the stated reason for the credit. Because every respondent reads the vignette, some implicit attribution is present in all arms; H2 therefore tests the marginal effect of an explicit source label, which is the decision an operator actually controls. Scaling of the benefit with the project (Section 6.4) is deliberately held constant across arms so that the D and E contrast isolates framing; an indexed arm can be added in a follow-on wave to test scaling separately.

A.5 Outcome measures, in order

1. Support for the project, seven-point scale (primary outcome).
2. Referendum vote, for or against (binary).
3. Perceived fairness of the arrangement, seven-point scale.
4. Perceived risk to household finances, health, or environment, seven-point scale.
5. "Would you describe this arrangement as a bribe?" Seven-point scale (H4 manipulation check).
6. Attribution check: "If this arrangement were adopted, who would be responsible for the monthly credit?" Open response, coded for naming the facility (H2 manipulation check).
7. Behavioral intention: willingness to attend a public meeting in support of, or in opposition to, the project.

Covariates collected after the outcomes: homeownership, monthly electric bill burden, political identification, urbanicity, and the Pew Research Center (2026) item on the expected societal effect of artificial intelligence.

A.6 Pre-registered predictions

H1: Arm B exceeds Arm A on the primary outcome. H2: Arm C exceeds Arm B. H4: Arm E exceeds Arm D. Replication check: Arm D at or below Arm C would indicate that compensation framing crowds out acceptance relative to a neutrally framed credit of identical value; Arm D above Arm A would show that even compensation-framed direct delivery outperforms aggregate delivery. Exploratory: Arm E against Arm C.

A.7 Analysis

Ordinary least squares regression of the primary outcome on arm indicators with heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors; logistic regression for the referendum item; pre-registered pairwise contrasts with Holm correction; covariate-adjusted models reported as robustness checks. A null result on H4 would require revision of Sections 6 and 8, as noted in Section 11. Data, code, and the pre-registration will be posted with the next revision of this paper.