PARTIAL TRUTHS

Named Techniques in T5 and Village of Grayslake Public Claims

This document examines eleven public claims about the T5@Chicago IV data center campus, taken from T5 Data Centers' website (investingingrayslake.com) and the Village of Grayslake's Data Center Campus FAQ, and names the rhetorical technique each one relies on.

Almost none of the claims is outright false, so "misinformation" is not quite the right label. These claims fit the pattern researchers call **paltering**: using statements that are technically true to leave a false impression (Rogers, Zeckhauser, Gino, Norton & Schweitzer, "Artful Paltering," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 2017).

Several technique names below come from the seven propaganda devices catalogued by the Institute for Propaganda Analysis (IPA)[1]; the rest are standard terms from logic and rhetoric. The labels describe how each statement works on a reader; they do not establish the speaker's intent.

The table below pairs each claim with the technique it relies on and explains how that technique works in the specific case. For a fuller description of each technique, including what it is, why it works on readers, and how to spot it, see the **Glossary of techniques** at the end of this document.

Claim-by-claim analysis

Card	Claim (source)	Technique	How it works here
Transparency	"100% transparency," "24 public meetings" (Village)	**Glittering generality** (IPA)[2]; **padding / misleading aggregation**	"100% transparency" is a virtue word with nothing measurable behind it. The 24 counts 18 meetings from earlier, unrelated zoning approvals going back to 2009; only 6 were about the data center. Claiming full transparency while withholding documents over litigation contradicts itself.
Studies	"eight-month public review… technical studies" (T5)	**Misleading implicature**; **foregone conclusion** (a form of begging the question)	The wording implies the studies came before the decision. The Village says they happen during permitting, after approval, and it already states what they "will" show before they are done.

[1]The Institute for Propaganda Analysis (1937–1942), a U.S. nonprofit founded by Columbia University professor Clyde R. Miller, published a list of seven propaganda devices that remains a well-known and widely accepted standard for recognizing propaganda, still taught in media-literacy and civics courses today.

[2]Institute for Propaganda Analysis; see note 1.

Card	Claim (source)	Technique	How it works here
Water	"less than 0.25% of its daily water flow" (T5)	**Denominator selection** (flattering-base framing)	Dividing by the regional water agency's supply makes the number tiny. Measured against Grayslake's own supply, the same 50,000 gallons a day is 3.6%. T5 gives a percentage instead of gallons.
Electric bills	"$0 increase in electric costs" (T5)	**Question substitution**; **weasel words**	The Village's FAQ answers a narrower question: whether Grayslake will pay more than neighboring towns. ComEd's "largely contained" and "do not directly affect" leave room for indirect increases.
POWER Act	"data centers pay their own separate rates" (T5)	**Overclaiming legal protection** (false reassurance)	T5 presents current law as settled protection. The Village backs a new law to go "beyond current state laws," which implies the protection is not complete.
$1.4 billion	"Where $1.4 Billion Goes" (T5)	**Transfer** (IPA)[3]; **conflation / bundling**; **projection presented as fact**	The figure is linked to things people value: schools, parks, libraries, a recreation center. The Village says the recreation center and downtown projects depend on different money and are only "under consideration." The figure itself is preliminary, spread over 20 years, and split across separate taxing districts.
Tax breaks	"No property tax incentives," "No local tax breaks" (Village)	**Scope restriction / lying by omission**; **card stacking** (IPA)[4]	"Property" and "Village" narrow the claim until it is true. It leaves out the state program, which exempts T5 from state *and locally imposed* sales and use taxes, an estimated $15.6 million for this campus.
Jobs	"Up to 1,500 new jobs" (T5)	**Ceiling framing ("up to")**; **conflation**	"Up to" is a maximum. Temporary construction jobs over a 7–10-year build are presented as "new jobs in the community." The Village's permanent-job figure depends on an "if."
Sound	"often be quieter than existing traffic" (T5)	**Weasel words / hedging**; **apples-to-oranges comparison**	"Often," "expected," and "preliminary" make the claim impossible to prove wrong. It compares constant equipment noise with intermittent traffic and gives no decibel figure.
Generators	Limited "to less than 60 hours" a year (Village)	**Unsourced statistic**; **omitting the qualifier**	The FAQ gives no source for 60 hours. Under federal rules (40 CFR 63.6640(f)), emergency use has no time limit; the hour caps apply to testing and maintenance.

[3]Institute for Propaganda Analysis; see note 1.

[4]Institute for Propaganda Analysis; see note 1.

Card	Claim (source)	Technique	How it works here
Wetlands	Pausing the wetlands permit, "reflecting our commitment…" (T5)	**Spin / positive reframing**; **euphemism**	A retreat under pressure is presented as a voluntary virtue. The Village says T5 filed without telling it and the Village pushed back. "Paused" or "halted" is not "withdrawn."

Patterns across the claims

- **Deferral to the permit process.** Studies, sound limits, and hard numbers all come after approval, when they can no longer affect the decision.
- **Commitments that can't be enforced.** Phrases like "committed to," "considering ways," and "under consideration" appear where a written obligation would be.
- **Hedge words carrying the claim.** "Largely," "directly," "often," "up to," "expected," "local."
- **The two sources don't agree.** T5 and the Village give different construction-job figures, and T5's claim that current law already protects ratepayers sits against the Village's support for a new law. Where the project's own promoters disagree, the disagreement is harder to dismiss than any outside rebuttal.

Glossary of techniques

Each technique named above, in alphabetical order: what it is, why it works on readers, and how to spot it.

Apples-to-oranges comparison. Comparing two things that differ in a way that matters, so the comparison flatters the claim. It works because a familiar reference point feels concrete, and readers rarely check whether the two are measured the same way or over the same time. Before accepting the comparison, ask whether the two things are alike in kind, duration, and scale.

Card stacking (IPA)[5]. Presenting only the facts that favor a conclusion and leaving out those that cut against it. Each fact shown may be accurate, so the case looks well supported; the distortion is in the selection. Ask what a complete accounting would include and whether anything relevant is missing.

Ceiling framing ("up to"). Stating the maximum possible outcome as if it were the expected one. "Up to 1,500" is technically true of any number from zero to 1,500, but readers remember the large figure. Watch for "up to," "as much as," and "as many as," and ask for the likely or guaranteed number instead.

Conflation / bundling. Merging separate things into one figure or story so that the benefits of one appear to belong to the other. Readers take in the combined picture and rarely separate the parts, especially when they are listed together. Ask which pieces are actually funded, committed, or caused by the thing being promoted.

Denominator selection. Choosing the base a number is divided by so the resulting percentage looks as small, or as large, as desired. The underlying quantity does not change: the same amount can be a fraction of a percent of a large total or several percent of a smaller, more relevant one. Ask for the raw number and for the comparison that matters to the people affected.

Euphemism. Substituting a mild or vague word for a more accurate, harsher one. It works because word choice shapes how serious something feels, and a softer term can suggest a different outcome altogether, such as "paused" rather than "withdrawn." Ask what the plain word for the event would be and whether the softer one means the same thing.

Foregone conclusion (begging the question). Stating the result of an investigation before the investigation is done. The claim borrows the credibility of a study that has not yet produced evidence, and it signals that the outcome will not change the decision. Ask what the evidence is today and what would happen if the study found otherwise.

Glittering generality (IPA)[6]. A virtue word or slogan, such as "transparency" or "commitment," used in place of specifics. Because nearly everyone approves of the value named, the phrase draws agreement without offering anything to check. Ask what the word would mean in measurable terms and whether that standard was met.

Misleading aggregation (padding). Inflating a count by folding in items that do not belong to the category being discussed. The total sounds substantial, and few readers break it down to see which parts are relevant. Ask for a count of only the items that match the claim.

Misleading implicature. Wording that lets readers infer something the speaker never actually says. The literal statement stays defensible, while the implied one, often about timing or cause, does the persuading. Ask whether the implied claim is stated anywhere, and if not, why not.

Omitting the qualifier. Stating a rule or limit without the exception that changes its meaning. The partial statement is accurate as far as it goes, but readers assume it applies in every case, including the ones the exception covers. Ask when the limit does not apply.

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[5]Institute for Propaganda Analysis; see note 1.

[6]Institute for Propaganda Analysis; see note 1.

Overclaiming legal protection (false reassurance). Presenting a law, rule, or policy as a firmer guarantee than it is. It works because most readers cannot check the legal details and assume a stated protection is complete. Ask for the specific provision and whether it actually covers the situation in question.

Paltering. The umbrella technique: using statements that are technically true to create a false impression. Because each sentence can be defended as accurate, the speaker avoids the charge of lying while the reader still ends up misinformed. Rogers and colleagues (2017) found that people who palter tend to see it as more ethical than outright lying, while those who discover they were misled judge it nearly as harshly.

Projection presented as fact. Stating a forecast as if it were a settled outcome. Qualifiers in the underlying source, such as "preliminary" or "subject to change," drop away as the number is repeated. Ask who made the estimate, what it assumes, and what is guaranteed in writing.

Question substitution. Answering a different, narrower question than the one asked, usually one with an easier answer. The response sounds like a reply, so readers assume their question was addressed. Compare the question actually asked with the question actually answered.

Scope restriction / lying by omission. Narrowing a claim with a limiting word, such as "local" or "property," until it becomes true, while the broad impression stays intact. The reader hears the headline; the limiting word does its work unnoticed. Ask what falls outside the stated scope and whether it matters.

Spin / positive reframing. Recasting an unfavorable event as evidence of good intentions or good character. The facts may be accurate, but the interpretation offered steers the reader away from a less flattering explanation. Ask what caused the event and compare that with the motive being claimed.

Transfer (IPA)[7]. Associating a claim with something the audience already values, such as schools, parks, or public safety, so the good feeling carries over. The actual link may be loose or indirect, but the emotional association makes it feel close. Ask whether the connection is direct, funded, and committed, or merely placed side by side.

Unsourced statistic. A specific number offered without saying where it comes from. Precision makes a figure sound researched, which discourages readers from questioning it. Ask for the source, the method, and what the number does and does not cover.

Weasel words / hedging. Qualifiers such as "often," "largely," "expected," and "directly" that let a claim sound strong while committing to very little. The reader hears the confident core, and the qualifier preserves an exit if the claim proves wrong. Remove each qualifier and ask whether the speaker would still stand behind the statement.

Sources: investingingrayslake.com ("Paid for by T5 Data Centers"), checked Sept. 27, 2026; Village of Grayslake Data Center Campus FAQ, updated Aug. 25, 2026; Illinois DCEO, 2025 Data Centers Annual Report; 40 CFR 63.6640(f). More: sellingoutgrayslake.com

[7] Institute for Propaganda Analysis; see note 1.