

# St. Louis Park efficient buildings program



## Unlocking energy savings potential

More than \$66 million is spent annually on electricity and natural gas in St. Louis Park buildings. Meanwhile, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that the average building wastes 30 percent of the energy it consumes due to inefficiencies. Increasing energy efficiency in St. Louis Park's large buildings can help drastically reduce the city's carbon footprint while cutting owner and tenant energy bills.

*To support community goals and building investment, the City of St. Louis Park is proposing the efficient buildings program.*

## As fuel mileage is for cars, energy benchmarking is for buildings

Benchmarking is the ongoing review of a building's energy and water performance to ensure it is using energy and water as anticipated, over time and relative to peers. Just as fuel mileage helps drivers understand vehicle efficiency, benchmarking and energy saving assessments give owners and occupants insight into a building's energy performance, which helps identify opportunities to reduce cost and waste. Since energy is the largest controllable cost for most commercial real estate, public sharing of benchmarking data drives the market towards more efficient buildings, which are highly valued in the market place. Managing energy allows property owners and managers to better control their building's energy and operational efficiency.

## What are the benefits?

- Track energy performance, control costs and identify options to improve efficiency
- Allow for building peer comparison
- Promote better energy decisions and greater demand for energy efficiency in the market
- Support the city's Climate Action Plan goal to reach carbon neutrality by 2040



Figure 1. An EPA study of benchmarking buildings showed an average 7 percent savings over three years.



## How it works

### Benchmarking

- Takes an average of a few hours a year.
- Requires no out-of-pocket expense. The city's selected reporting tool, web-based ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager, is free. ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager is the nationally preferred tool to measure and track building energy and water use.
- Convenient. Xcel Energy and CenterPoint Energy allows customer consumption data to be automatically uploaded into ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager.
- The city will provide access to training and a help desk for entering data and understanding a building's score.

### Energy saving assessments

- Review of building equipment and operation.
- Identify and recommend changes in operating practices or energy consuming equipment that will effectively save on energy bills.
- Accessible through utility rebate programs.

## Who it affects

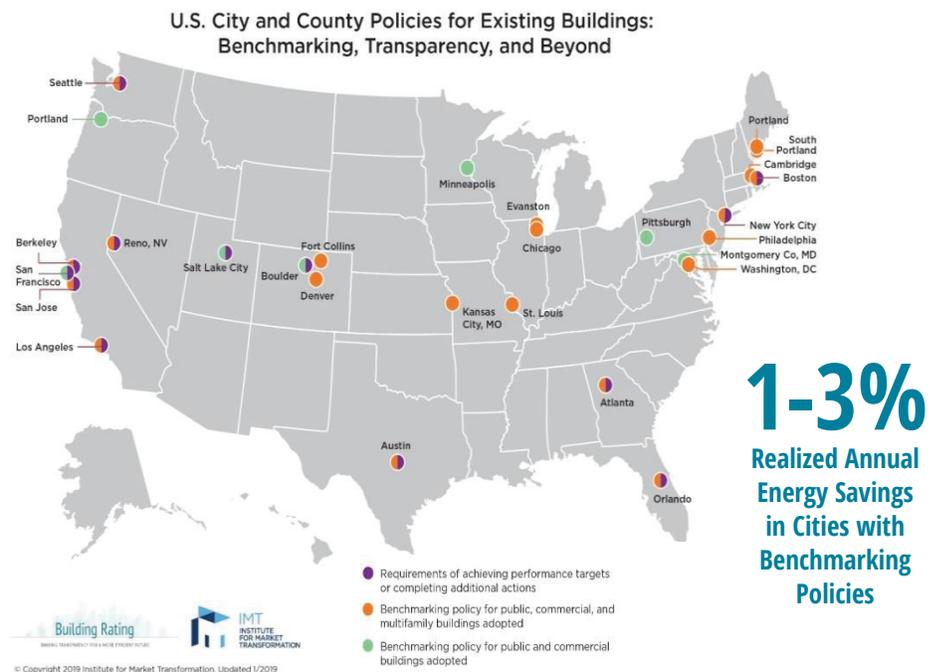
The proposed efficient buildings program would apply to about 260 large commercial and multifamily apartments and would include benchmarking reporting and transparency.

## Resources through Hennepin County

St. Louis Park is a pilot city in the Hennepin County Benchmarking Collaborative, which provides guidance, best practices and technical support on benchmarking programs. The collaborative also provides in-person and helpline training by phone, email and online meetings to building owners and managers. This makes benchmarking easy and increases the value of the results.

## Joining energy and climate leaders

More than 25 cities, including mid-size cities like Evanston, Ill., are showing that the building market thrives on information. Total building energy use in cities with benchmarking policies has dropped between one and three percent a year. The City of Minneapolis' commercial benchmarking policy has benchmarked over 400 buildings since 2013, expanding in early 2019 to include multifamily buildings and an energy evaluation requirement. Edina recently passed a similar policy, while other cities, including Saint Paul, are actively exploring benchmarking policies.



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