

Primer: San Antonio Benchmarking

WHY IS SAN ANTONIO PROMOTING BENCHMARKING?

San Antonio's Climate Action & Adaptation Plan sets a goal to be carbon neutral by 2050. Building energy use accounts for 48% of the city's carbon emissions, and the city must address that consumption if they are to achieve that climate goal. Between now and 2050, San Antonio aims to reduce carbon emissions 41% by 2030 and 71% by 2040, from a 2016 baseline.

Benchmarking policies are essential to accelerating energy efficiency, and they drive improvements to the bottom line. Buildings covered by benchmarking policies can identify inefficiencies and hidden problems while achieving savings and increasing value from reduced energy use.

The transparency can enable cities to build tools to identify (leveraging San Antonio's [Equity Atlas](#)) and prioritize outreach and assistance to buildings disproportionately impacted by energy burden, disinvestment, and compliance requirements (e.g. Denver's [Energy Burden Map](#)), as well as inform future policies to undo existing inequities. Transparency of energy information can also help identify the buildings in greatest need of improvement and help target them for investment and upgrades, as demonstrated by the [Low-income Energy Affordability Network partnership](#).

HISTORY OF SAN ANTONIO'S BENCHMARKING EFFORTS

June 2011: San Antonio began benchmarking municipal building energy and water consumption.

April 2016: The [San Antonio 2030 District](#) laid the groundwork for benchmarking through a voluntary, private sector-led initiative of building owners and occupants working to increase building performance.

August 2016: [SA Tomorrow Sustainability Plan](#) adopted, with the vision: "San Antonio is a leader in high performance and resilient buildings and infrastructure" and the identification of a benchmarking ordinance as a key strategy to reducing community energy consumption.

June 2017: City Council passes Resolution # 17-3844 in support of the Paris Climate Agreement, directing City staff to develop a plan to help San Antonio meet the objectives of this agreement.

January 2019: San Antonio was invited to join the American Cities Climate Challenge, which provides access to expert technical assistance on energy and carbon emissions reductions strategies to cities across the US. Passage of a benchmarking ordinance was one of the key priorities the city chose to pursue with this assistance.

October 2019: City of San Antonio passed its Climate Action & Adaptation Plan, [SA Climate Ready](#), with the goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2050. The plan identifies benchmarking of large buildings as a key strategy to reduce energy consumption.

October 2019: The Office of Sustainability convened a monthly Benchmarking Advisory Committee (BAC) comprised of property owners, businesses, energy performance professionals, and other stakeholders to assist with the development of a benchmarking policy.

NOW: As part of the Climate Challenge and the implementation of the SA Climate Ready plan, the city is continuing to work with partners and stakeholders to develop and pass a benchmarking ordinance for large commercial and multifamily buildings that reflects the unique needs of San

For more information, visit the City of San Antonio's [Energy Benchmarking and Disclosure for Buildings](#) website.

Antonio. Partner organizations including local and national chapters of the US Green Building Council, Urban Land Institute, American Institute of Architects, and the San Antonio 2030 District are reaching out to local stakeholders to inform and involve them in the development process.

WHAT MIGHT THE BENCHMARKING POLICY INCLUDE?

San Antonio’s benchmarking ordinance has not yet been developed, and could include the following variation in provisions:

- Building type – commercial, industrial, multifamily, municipal
- Size threshold – 25,000, 50,000, or 100,000 sqft
- Timeline for compliance – annually vs. phased in over time
- Information tracked – energy, water
- Information reported – whole building, base building, tenant data
- Data verification criteria
- Format of information disclosure
- Whole-building data access procedures
- Activity beyond benchmarking – audits, re-tuning, retro-commissioning (RCx)
- Technical support from CoSA or another third-party
- Recognition – awards, competition, certificates, etc.

WHAT DO OTHER CITIES’ POLICIES REQUIRE?

Over 30 cities across the U.S. require benchmarking of commercial and multifamily building energy performance. A few examples:

City	Date Passed	Buildings Included	Type of Data	Other Requirements
Orlando	Dec 2016	Non-res and MF >50KSF	Energy	Audit/RCx every 5 years if ENERGY STAR score < 50
Los Angeles	Dec 2016	Non-res & MF >20KSF	Energy & Water	ASHRAE Level II Audit & RCx every 5 years
Chicago	Sept 2013	Non-res & MF >50KSF	Energy	Data verification every 3 years
Atlanta	April 2015	Non-res & MF >25KSF Municipal >10KSF	Energy & Water	Audit every 10 years unless ENERGY STAR certified
Salt Lake City	Aug 2017	Non-res >50KSF 2019, >25 KSF 2020	Energy & Water	Tune-up evaluation if ENERGY STAR score < 50

HOW CAN REAL ESTATE INDIVIDUALS ENGAGE?

The benchmarking ordinance is still under development and a draft will be released in late 2020. Real estate actors can engage with City policymakers and provide input on policy provisions:

Attend ULI San Antonio events introducing and discussing benchmarking:
<https://sanantonio.uli.org/events/>

Join BAC meetings to participate in the policy formation discussion:
<https://www.sanantonio.gov/sustainability/Energy/EnergyBenchmarking#282543813-meetings>

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