

Building Benchmarking: The Next Big Thing

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Central Minneapolis across the Mississippi River. Photo credit: kla4067 via flickr

Recently, the city of Minneapolis became the latest city to lead by example in improving building performance by requiring the benchmarking and disclosure of energy and water usage for the city's public and commercial building stock. USGBC supports benchmarking initiatives through the [Mainstream Building Benchmarking Campaign](#) and applauds the city's move.

However, if a building owner wants to benchmark a property, it requires access to the building's total energy consumption. Believe it or not, sometimes building owners don't have access to this information in their own buildings. That's why USGBC recently [led a discussion](#) between Minneapolis building industry stakeholders, Minnesota utilities, and government officials on how to better share energy and water utility data under our [Improve Energy Data Access Campaign](#).

This clear public policy commitment by the city leaders, and the engagement by private stakeholders, shows that Minneapolis is on the right track in becoming a national leader in building energy efficiency.

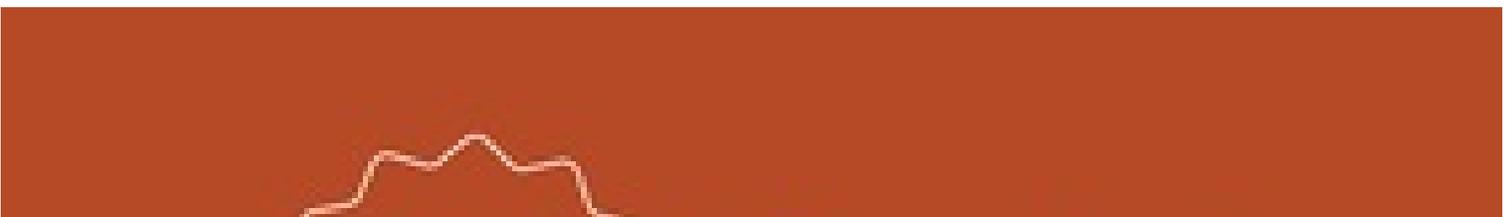
The [ordinance](#) which passed the Minneapolis City Council on February 8th phases in the benchmarking and disclosure requirements for buildings over the next four years. Public buildings larger than 25,000 square feet will start disclosing the information starting in 2013. Private commercial buildings larger than 100,000 square feet would be required to start benchmarking on June 1, 2014 and publicly disclose the information in 2015. Private commercial buildings larger than 50,000 square feet will begin reporting June 1, 2015, and publicly disclosing in 2016.

Minneapolis becomes only the seventh U.S. city to require benchmarking and disclosure of its city's buildings. [Philadelphia](#) was the last city to pass a similar ordinance following the lead of New York, Seattle, Austin, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. Currently, only California and Washington State mandate it at a statewide level.

As more and more city governments look to improve the performance of existing building stock, benchmarking policies offer a unique way for city governments to move building owners to improve building performance through tracking energy and water usage. USGBC, and its network of community chapters, are committed to supporting other governments, and private sector leaders, to provide the expertise, resources, and policy know-how to help implement smart and effective benchmarking laws.

Congratulations to the city of Minneapolis for their leadership on this issue. In the coming months and years ahead, USGBC looks forward to working with other U.S. city leaders on the next big public policy push: building benchmarking!

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