



Legislation Text

File #: 21-1651, **Version:** 1

An Ordinance to Add Chapter 104 (Energy and Water Benchmarking) to Title VIII of the Code of the City of Ann Arbor (ORD-21-30)

In November 2019, Ann Arbor's City Council unanimously adopted a Climate Emergency Declaration committing to charting a path for how the entire Ann Arbor community could achieve carbon neutrality by the year 2030. In June 2020, City Council unanimously adopted the A²ZERO Carbon Neutrality Plan, a document created with input from thousands of Ann Arborites to lay out seven strategies for our community to achieve carbon neutrality.

The A²ZERO Plan seeks to ensure that buildings in Ann Arbor - which account for 65% of total community-wide greenhouse gas emissions - are as energy and water efficient as possible, and benchmarking is one of the actions identified in the A²ZERO Plan.

Benchmarking is measuring and reporting the energy and water usage of a building which allows for the evaluation of a building's usage over time and for comparison to similar buildings which enables better decision-making around building energy and water use thereby helping occupants and owners save money and energy while improving comfort and health.

Benchmarking allows owners and occupants (whether existing or prospective) to understand the relative energy and water usage and efficiency of benchmarked buildings as well as relative to others similar buildings. This information helps with strategic decisions that will help save money and energy while improving comfort and health. With energy and water costs accounting for an average of 26.8% of office building operating costs nationally, and data showing that 30% of energy consumed in buildings is used inefficiently or unnecessarily, efficiency improvements can help building owners and tenants significantly reduce utility bills. These savings can be put toward other needs such as the purchase of goods and services, which drive local economic activity. Making buildings and properties in Ann Arbor, including City-owned buildings, more energy efficient also helps create jobs at all skill levels, and frees up money to flow back into the local economy.

Commercial and multifamily benchmarking and transparency is an easy way to get data and information on how buildings are performing into the hands of their owners and managers. Owners will be able to look across their portfolio to identify opportunities for energy and financial savings, and they can understand how their buildings are performing relative to others of similar characteristics. The benchmarking program will provide consistent and relevant information to the market, so that tenants, renters, and occupants can make informed decisions (similar to MPG ratings on cars).

The proposed ordinance and benchmarking program will encourage energy efficiency in large buildings across Ann Arbor - on average, buildings that benchmark consistently save 7% of energy consumption, resulting in financial savings as well. Improving the energy efficiency of Ann Arbor buildings will provide economic and health benefits to the Ann Arbor community.

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(See Attached Ordinance)