



Village of Oak Park

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Agenda Item Summary

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Agenda Item Title

An Ordinance Amending Chapter 7 (“Buildings”) of the Oak Park Village Code By Adding a New Article 15 (“Energy and Water Benchmarking”)

Overview

An ordinance to amend the Village Code to include provisions for energy and water benchmarking at large existing buildings.

Recommendation

Adopt the ordinance.

Fiscal Impact

The 2023 CIP allocates \$25,000 to provide program support to Village staff and local property managers and building owners. The community building data collection platform, USEPA’s Energy Star Portfolio Manager, is free to users.

Background

The Oak Park 2019 community greenhouse gas inventory identified that seventy percent of carbon emissions are due to residential and commercial building energy. In order to reach the Village’s adopted goal of reducing carbon emissions by 2030, fossil fuel energy use at local buildings must decrease significantly. The plan also calls for water conservation measures.

The *Climate Ready Oak Park* plan, adopted August 1, 2022, includes short-term action EN01, “Perform annual mandatory energy benchmarking at all large buildings (such as 10,000 sq. ft. or larger) via a transparent platform, as allowed by State statute.” Building energy benchmarking refers to measuring a building’s energy use, and in some cases water use, and comparing it to the energy use of similar buildings, its own historical energy use, or a reference performance level.

Benchmarking energy use with transparent data sharing can change how people behave in and operate buildings in ways that bring immediate and low-cost reductions in energy consumption. U.S. EPA found that buildings which were consistently benchmarked achieved an average annual energy savings of 2.4 percent, and can result in significant cost savings and increased property value for building owners.

Benchmarking provides property managers a baseline understanding of a building's energy and water use, and is an important first step to identifying energy and water efficiency improvements. Benchmarking ordinances provide an opportunity for local government to engage with building owners who may not otherwise take advantage of the benefits of energy efficiency improvements. Data transparency requirements improve consumer access to information about a building's energy use and make building performance more visible in the marketplace, encouraging more building owners to invest in energy efficiency.

Benchmarking data is collected and reported through Energy Star Portfolio Manager, the U.S. EPA's free, secure, web-based tool. At least 25% of the nation's building square footage is benchmarked through this tool. Buildings can also use the tool to generate building-specific greenhouse gas emissions, generate an Energy Star score, and track building water and waste. U.S. EPA's ENERGY STAR team provides on-demand training and is available to answer questions and provide technical support across all phases of policy development and implementation.

By enacting benchmarking policies, local decision makers and government staff can establish collaborative relationships with building owners in their community and gain insight into their building stock. Several local governments have adopted benchmarking ordinances around the U.S. (see attached map), including Evanston, Ann Arbor, Chicago, and Indianapolis.

Alternatives

- Seek additional information from staff.

Previous Board Action

- The Board received a presentation on benchmarking and other building decarbonization policies on January 23, 2023 (ID 23-27). The Board directed staff to move forward with a benchmarking ordinance.

Citizen Advisory Commission Action

- Members of the Environment & Energy Commission provided feedback on the draft ordinance on September 9, 2022.
- The Business Association Council provided feedback on the proposed benchmarking policy on December 7, 2022.
- The Building Code Advisory Council (BCAC) deliberated the proposed policy on October 20, 2022. The BCAC voted to recommend a Village benchmarking ordinance.
- The Village hosted an engagement forum for owners of large buildings on January 19, 2023.

Anticipated Future Actions/Commitments

Direct staff to take the actions necessary to enact and support the benchmarking ordinance and program.

Intergovernmental Cooperation Opportunities

Intergovernmental partners will be invited to engage in the benchmarking training program.