



Environmental Advisory Board

Meeting Agenda

March 26, 2025 3:00 P.M.

Centennial II HR Conference Room B
805 Central Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202
Virtual Attendance through Microsoft Teams

Order of Business

- I. Public Comment**
- II. Call to Order**
- III. Administrative Action***
 - Approval of February 26, 2025 – Meeting minutes
- IV. Office of Environment and Sustainability Comments**
 - Seeds of Change Grants - Open Call for Applications due 4/30/2025
- V. Information/Updates**
 - Update on meeting with Councilmember Owens – Kylie & Dave
 - Survey results for April-December Meeting Schedule
- VI. Items for Vote***
 - April-December Meeting Schedule
- VII. Presentations**
 - Building Performance Standards Presentation – Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (MEEA)
- VIII. Open Discussion**
 - Policy Comments
 - i. Cincy on Track
 - ii. Impervious Surface Fee
- IX. Next Meeting**
 -
- X. Adjournment**

**Board Action Requested*

Agenda Packet Materials:

- Draft meeting minutes from 2/26/2025
- April-December Meeting Schedule Survey Results
- Draft Comment: Cincy On Track Funding
- Draft Comment: Impervious Surface Fee
- Draft Impervious Surface Fee Resolution
- BPS Fact Sheet, General FAQ, Stakeholder Engagement Plan
- Building performance standards in Cincinnati: Progress update and stakeholder engagement Presentation

Environmental Advisory Board

Minutes of February 26, 2025

Members Present:

- **In person:** Dave Schmitt; Douglas Walton; Emmy Schroder; Kylie Johnson; Monica Perdomo; Rico Blackman; Susan Sprigg; Van Sullivan
- **Virtual:** Andrew Musgrave; Ashlee Young; Julie Shifman; Nathan Alley

Members Absent: Ericka Copeland; Nayana Shah; Oliver Kroner

Staff Present: Amanda Testerman; Erin Kabel

Meeting: A meeting of the Environmental Advisory Board was held on February 26, 2025 at 3:00 PM at Centennial II HR Conference Room B, 805 Central Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202.

Meeting Agenda:

- I. **Public Comment**
- II. **Call to Order at 3:03 PM**
- III. **Information/Updates**
 - Welcome to New Board members: Douglas Walton, Emmy Schroder, Monica Perdomo, Nayana Shah
 - Board members introductions
- IV. **Administrative Action***
 - Approval of January 29, 2025 – Meeting minutes
- V. **Office of Environment and Sustainability Comments**
 - Bloomberg Youth Climate Action Seeds of Change mini grant applications open until 2/28/25
 - <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/oes/news/city-invites-grant-applications-to-activate-the-2023-green-cincinnati-plan-for-a-second-year/>
- VI. **Items for Vote***
 - Officer Nominations and Elections
 - Reviewed list of nominations for Chair and Vice Chair
 - Chair: Kylie Johnson; Van Sullivan (declined)
 - Vice Chair: Dave Schmitt; Nathan Alley (declined); Susan Sprigg (declined)
 - Motion to elect Kylie Johnson as Chair
 - Yes – 12 votes; no – 0 votes [KYLIE JOHNSON ELECTED AS CHAIR]
 - Motion to elect Dave Schmitt as Vice Chair:
 - Yes – 12 votes; no – votes [DAVE SCHMITT ELECTED AS VICE CHAIR]
 - Motion to schedule meeting on Wednesday, March 26 at 3pm
 - Yes – 11 votes; No – 0 votes; Abstain – 1 vote [MOTION PASSES]
- VII. **Presentations**
 - Green Infrastructure Accelerator Take-aways – Sam Dunlap
- VIII. **Open Discussion**
 - Policy discussion & comment on recommendations to Council on Green Infrastructure/Stormwater
 - EAB members will provide comment and recommendations on practices and policies to support Green Infrastructure in support of the Green Cincinnati Plan. EAB members providing insight: Kylie Johnson, Dave Schmitt, Van Sullivan, Susan Sprigg, Rico Blackman, Douglas Walton, Nathan Alley. Comment to be reviewed during March meeting.
- I. **Next Meeting**
 - Wednesday, March 26, 2025 at 3:00 PM
- II. **Adjournment at 4:30 PM**

**Survey Results - EAB Meeting Time Preferences
April-December 2025**

Survey Results – Highest Ranked					
Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9					
9:30					
10					
10:30					
10					
10:30					
11					
11:30					
11					
11:30					
12					
12:30					
1	(1)		(4)	(5)	
1:30	Monday		Wednesday	Thursday	
2	1-2:30 PM		1-2:30 PM	1-2:30 PM	
2:30					
3	(6)		(2)	(3)	
3:30	Monday		Wednesday	Thursday	
4	3-4:30 PM		3-4:30 PM	3-4:30 PM	
4:30					

Raw survey results:

Id	1	2	3	4	5	6
Start time	03/07/2025 13:46	03/09/2025 3:10	03/09/2025 10:32	03/09/2025 20:50	03/13/2025 10:33	03/14/2025 7:41
Completion time	03/07/2025 13:50	03/09/2025 3:12	03/09/2025 10:38	03/09/2025 20:53	03/13/2025 10:35	03/14/2025 7:49
Monday Morning (10am-11:30am)	Likely available	Could be available	Could be available	Always available	Never available	Likely available
Monday Mid-afternoon (1pm-2:30pm)	Likely available	Could be available	Could be available	Always available	Likely available	Could be available
Monday Late Afternoon (3pm-4:30pm)	Could be available	Likely available	Likely available	Always available	Likely available	Never available
Tuesday Morning (10am-11:30am)	Never available	Could be available	Could be available	Always available	Never available	Likely available
Tuesday Mid-afternoon (1pm-2:30pm)	Could be available	Could be available	Likely available	Always available	Never available	Could be available
Tuesday Late Afternoon (3pm-4:30pm)	Always available	Likely available	Always available	Always available	Never available	Never available
Wednesday Morning (10am-11:30am)	Could be available	Could be available	Never available	Never available	Always available	Likely available
Wednesday Mid-afternoon (1pm-2:30pm)	Could be available	Could be available	Could be available	Likely available	Always available	Could be available
Wednesday Late Afternoon (3pm-4:30pm)	Always available	Likely available	Always available	Always available	Always available	Never available
Thursday Morning (10am-11:30am)	Likely available	Could be available	Never available	Never available	Always available	Likely available
Thursday Mid-afternoon (1pm-2:30pm)	Could be available	Could be available	Could be available	Could be available	Always available	Could be available
Thursday Late Afternoon (3pm-4:30pm)	Always available	Likely available	Always available	Always available	Always available	Never available
Friday Morning (10am-11:30am)	Likely available	Could be available	Never available	Likely available	Likely available	Likely available
Friday Mid-afternoon (1pm-2:30pm)	Likely available	Could be available	Could be available	Never available	Likely available	Could be available
Friday Afternoon (3pm-4:30pm)	Never available	Likely available	Likely available	Never available	Never available	Never available

Dear City of Cincinnati Council Members,

As members of the City of Cincinnati Environmental Advisory Board (EAB), we agree it is a timely moment to share our thoughts and recommendations for the upcoming FY26 budget cycle, especially considering that 2026-2031 will represent the City's first six-year capital plan utilizing the full benefit of Cincinnati Southern Railway (CSR) Trust Disbursements.

We appreciate the bold climate leadership of the City Administration and City Council, and we applaud you for committing sustained funding in the budget for 2023 Green Cincinnati Plan (GCP) efforts and implementation. This funding prioritization demonstrates your commitment to sustainability, equity, and resilience. While dedicated GCP funding was a major step in the right direction, we recognize that the first round of CSR Trust Disbursements is another critical opportunity to center environmental justice and equity in budget decision-making.

The "Cincy on Track" plan was created to ensure that the CSR Trust Disbursements are thoughtfully and intentionally spent in a way that prioritizes projects that will most benefit historically underserved minority and low-income populations. As the [2023 report states](#), "The Administration will prioritize projects to drive increased equity in our City by analyzing the demographics of the beneficiaries most directly affected by each proposed project and identifying those projects that can deliver the most benefit to historically underserved minority and low-income communities. The intent is that this methodology for decision making will create and institutionalize a new approach that will drive consistently equitable infrastructure funding and improve service delivery to our communities in the greatest need moving forward."

As you determine which projects to prioritize, we respectfully remind you of the above stated intent of the funds to drive increased equity in our City and identify projects that can deliver the most benefit to historically underserved minority and low-income communities. Please carefully review where investments have historically been prioritized and consider which neighborhoods have been subject to disinvestment.

In addition to centering equity in your decision-making, we further recommend that you maximize this unique opportunity to invest in climate adaptation and resilience planning to ensure long-term sustainability for our communities. This includes prioritizing electric vehicle charging infrastructure, energy efficiency upgrades, and continued investments in ecosystems and green infrastructure solutions.

Allocating this funding to projects that address equity, environmental justice, and resiliency is critical in a moment where Justice40 and other federal funding opportunities have evaporated. If federal Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law rollbacks continue, we estimate a loss of over \$1.7 billion in critical climate investments for Hamilton County alone, and over \$2.6 billion in our 10-county region ([source](#)). This is a conservative estimate, as the calculation does not include Climate Pollution Reduction Grant funds and it is not clear what other funds may not be included.

Additionally, *The Bill is Coming Due: Calculating the Financial Cost of Climate Change to Ohio's Local Governments*, is a first of its kind report that provides a conservative estimate of the additional costs of climate change impacts that municipalities across the state will incur, including Cincinnati. The report estimates that Ohio municipal spending will need to increase annually by \$1.8 billion to \$5.9 billion by 2050 to keep up with current spending levels. All of the costs outlined in the report are conservative estimates. We know that the true costs and impacts of climate change are predicted to be much higher, which further highlights how imperative it is that we act now to protect our communities.

The Green Cincinnati Plan and your past efforts have put our City on the map as a national leader in sustainability, but it is unrealistic for us to continue being a leader if the budget doesn't reflect climate equity and resiliency as priorities. Cincinnati must evolve and invest now to ensure an equitable and resilient future for our city. We thank you for your consideration and climate leadership.

Thank you,

City of Cincinnati Environmental Advisory Board

Dear City of Cincinnati Council Members,

Stormwater is a present and growing challenge for all cities, and Cincinnati is no exception. The water that falls on the hard surfaces of parking lots, buildings, and pavement has many detrimental effects – including increased risk of flooding in our neighborhoods, increased pollutants in our waterways, and increased risks to our drinking water.

Cities must find ways to responsibly manage stormwater. For this reason, the City of Cincinnati Environmental Advisory Board (EAB) recommends that City Council adopt a resolution supporting the use of an Impervious Surface Fee (ISF) to fund the Metropolitan Sewer District's (MSD) stormwater expenses.

The EAB recommends that the resolution also include the following:

- A call for an offsetting reduction of approximately 50% in current sewer charges.
- Support robust credits or allowances for properties that control their own stormwater using stormwater best management practices (BMPs).
- Endorse a timeline resulting in support for inclusion of the ISF in MSD's 2026 budget proposal.

Adoption of an ISF would yield 5 important benefits.

1) An ISF will expand the scale of improved stormwater management in our city.

For many properties, on-site solutions are the cheapest and best way to manage stormwater. Property owners have no incentive to adopt such measures without an ISF that gives credit for BMPs. MSD cannot do it alone. Let's make stormwater management part of everybody's job!

2) An ISF will reduce Combined Sewer Overflows (CSO) into our streams and rivers.

By incentivizing stormwater BMPs, the amount of stormwater entering MSD's stormwater system will be significantly reduced. This in turn will result in fewer CSO discharges into the Mill Creek and other area water bodies during rain events. This will both reduce MSD's cost of treating stormwater and help MSD meet the water quality goals mandated by the Consent Decree.

3) An ISF is a more equitable way to fund stormwater costs.

MSD's analysis shows that about half of their budget is spent managing stormwater, but none of their revenue is based on stormwater generation. Properties that generate excessive runoff should pay their fair share of MSD's stormwater costs. Only half of MSD's budget is spent managing sewage, but sewer users are forced to pay 100% of

MSD's costs. Right now, properties that generate excessive runoff are being subsidized by the average ratepayer. That's just not fair.

4) An ISF will reduce costs for most residential ratepayers.

MSD's affordability study shows that current sewer rates pose a significant hardship for many ratepayers, especially low-income residential customers. MSD's analysis shows that shifting a portion of stormwater management costs from sewer users to stormwater generators through an ISF would provide net savings to most residential customers, and especially low-income customers.

5) An ISF will provide a more adequate funding base for MSD.

MSD's 2025 budget disclosed hundreds of millions of dollars worth of deferred maintenance that it can't afford to perform. The recently completed 10-year plan for wet weather improvements accomplishes only a small percentage of the work needed to keep sewage out of our streams and basements. MSD can't raise more money presently because sewer rates already overburden many ratepayers. The ISF will enable some overall budget growth for MSD, which is urgently needed.

The Impervious Surface Fee has been under discussion for many years, and MSD has generated multiple reports quantifying its potential positive impacts for the district and for residents. On behalf of the Cincinnati Environmental Advisory Board, we thank you for your consideration of our recommendation and we would be happy to answer questions or provide any additional details and materials in support of this recommendation.

Thank you,

City of Cincinnati Environmental Advisory Board

Resolution Supporting Hamilton County's Adoption of an Impervious Surface Fee

Expressing the support of the Mayor and the City Council of the City of Cincinnati for a Hamilton County-wide Impervious Surface Fee to fund stormwater management.

WHEREAS, stormwater management consumes approximately half of the Metropolitan Sewer District's (MSD's) budget, and sewage management consumes the other half of MSD's budget; and

WHEREAS, none of MSD's revenue is based on stormwater generation, and sewer users are forced to pay nearly all of MSD's budget; and

WHEREAS, this system of funding MSD's operations is deeply unjust, and an Impervious Surface Fee would correct this injustice, reduce total MSD charges for most residential customers, and provide even more savings for most low-income ratepayers; and

WHEREAS, stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs), such as bioswales, pervious pavement, detention basins and rain gardens, are often the cheapest and most effective means of controlling stormwater; and

WHEREAS, MSD's existing rate structure gives area landowners no incentive to implement BMPs, so water runs off and becomes MSD's responsibility; and

WHEREAS, communities that have adopted Impervious Surface Fees with "credits" for installing BMPs have seen significant increases in the use of BMPs and significant reductions in stormwater discharges; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Cincinnati, State of Ohio:

Section 1. MSD should propose an Impervious Surface Fee at a rate that would fund MSD's stormwater obligations in its 2026 budget proposal and all subsequent budget proposals.

Section 2. MSD should propose an equal and offsetting reduction in its sewage-based charges for 2026, structured in a way that maximizes relief for residential and low-income customers.

Section 3. MSD should include in its Impervious Surface Fee proposal a system of credits that reward landowners for installing and maintaining stormwater BMPs.

Section 4. The Mayor and City Manager are encouraged to engage with the Hamilton County Commissioners to encourage adoption and implementation of an Impervious Surface Fee as part of MSD's annual budget.

Building Performance Standards (BPS) Fact Sheet

A **Building Performance Standard** (BPS) is a tool to help improve the efficiency and competitiveness of existing buildings by setting energy or emissions performance targets. Buildings account for 40% of global carbon emissions, and most of today's buildings will be in use for decades. A BPS can be a proactive and market-based policy mechanism to achieve emissions goals, helping cities remain competitive and resilient while enhancing quality of life and economic opportunity in their communities.

The specifics of a BPS can vary by municipality, ensuring that they are tailored to meet the unique needs of each community. Stakeholder engagement with businesses, property owners, and local leaders will help to inform clear, achievable BPS targets and help to ensure community-driven solutions. Only certain buildings (as specified by the policy) will be required to comply. Property owners will have the flexibility to decide what combination of physical or operational improvements can best achieve the standard.

BPS Benefits

- Enhances local quality of life and public wellbeing through improved health and lower emissions
- Supports hardworking families in our community through lower energy bills
- Increases workforce opportunities in well-paying trade jobs
- Advances energy independence and reliability

Key Features

Key features of a BPS often include:

1. Developed by local governments at the municipal level, allowing for flexible community-driven solutions.
2. A focus on larger buildings, often measured per sq. ft. threshold. These are typically the biggest energy consumers, thereby offering the largest return on investment.
3. A flexible, phased approach to achieving performance targets.

Technical Assistance

The Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (MEEA), Power a Clean Future Ohio (PCFO), Go Sustainable Energy, and the University of Cincinnati are currently providing support to Ohio municipalities to assist with the adoption and operation of Building Performance Standards. This includes stakeholder engagement, policy considerations, tool development, education and workforce development, compliance assistance and integration with incentive programs and financing. We look forward to your feedback during this process.

Stay Informed

Stakeholder feedback is important to this process. For more information, please contact alindburg@mwalliance.org or visit mwalliance.org.

City of Cincinnati

Building Performance Standards FAQ

The City of Cincinnati is considering options to achieve city goals as outlined in the Green Cincinnati Plan (GCP)¹. One strategy within the Plan includes improving the health and energy efficiency in existing buildings through the implementation of a Building Performance Standard (BPS) policy and administering a support program for impacted buildings.

Responses to some of the most common building performance standard questions are outlined below.

- **What is a Building Performance Standard?**

Building Performance Standards (BPS) set targets for energy consumption and/or emissions reduction for certain existing buildings. BPS typically set a performance baseline across the local building stock and set reasonable and effective performance targets to improve and accomplish city goals over time. These standards can lead to large energy and cost savings for building owners and help municipalities achieve their specific climate action goals. There are many types of BPS, with varying aspects and requirements. The City of Cincinnati will be conducting an inclusive stakeholder engagement process for feedback to help determine detailed targets, compliance mechanisms, and support programs.

- **What is a benchmarking ordinance?**

Benchmarking policies require building owners to track and report on the energy use of their properties. By doing so, these policies allow building owners to observe their energy consumption and understand how their properties are performing month-by-month and year-by-year. The benchmarking process reveals their properties' energy use patterns and how their properties compare to other similarly situated properties (i.e., properties with the same building type, function, size, location, metering and beyond.).

Once building owners see this data, interest in improvements to their energy performance can increase. In this sense, benchmarking works the same way as a wearable activity tracker – we see the initial raw data (e.g., daily steps taken, daily calories burned, average heartrate) and we inherently want to improve performance.

- **How do benchmarking ordinances and BPS work together?**

Benchmarking and BPS work together, with BPS taking the benefits of benchmarking ordinances one step further. A BPS typically includes the requirement of energy benchmarking or may follow the passage of a benchmarking ordinance.

¹ Green Cincinnati Plan: <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/oes/climate/climate-protection-green-cincinnati-plan/green-cincinnati-plan-2023-spreads/>

- **Can a BPS or benchmarking ordinance help meet the Green Cincinnati Plan goals?**

Benchmarking ordinances and BPS are proven mechanisms to reduce energy consumption and emissions in existing buildings. Commercial and residential buildings in Cincinnati account for more than 40% of the city's carbon emissions, making addressing emissions from existing buildings critical to meeting any climate goal. The Green Cincinnati Plan lists four items that are specifically aligned with the goals of BPS, including: (1) reducing building emissions 30% from 2021 levels by 2030; (2) improving building performance by implementing policies like benchmarking, building performance standards, or other relevant energy standards; (3) reducing the number of households experiencing energy poverty 10% from 2022 levels by 2028, and; (4) creating programs and standards that will increase the energy efficiency of residential and multi-family buildings in order to decrease energy poverty.

- **Have other cities done BPS or benchmarking?**

Yes. A number of cities across the U.S. have now implemented both policies, and dozens have officially signed onto implementing a BPS through the National BPS Coalition². The Coalition provides a comparison of all currently implemented BPS in the United States, including their compliance and enforcement levers. A map and information about benchmarking ordinances and BPS in the Midwest is available through the Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance³.

- **What impacts have other cities seen from benchmarking and BPS?**

One of the clearest benefits of both benchmarking and BPS policies is the reduced building operating costs and utility bills from lowered energy use. Every city is unique, but several U.S. cities have seen 3-8% reductions in energy use across participating buildings through a benchmarking ordinance⁴. **ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager**, a widely used free energy tracking platform, shows an average of 2.4% energy savings annually for buildings that benchmark. The other communities shown below have seen the following positive impacts from benchmarking alone; BPS would garner even larger savings.

City	Energy Savings	Cost Savings
Chicago	5.2% reduction (2014 - 2018)	\$15.1 million per year
Minneapolis	5.2% reduction (2014 - 2018)	\$21 million per year
Denver	4.5% reduction (2017 - 2018)	\$13.5 million per year

² National BPS Coalition: <https://nationalbpscoalition.org/>

³ Building Energy Data: <https://www.mwalliance.org/building-efficiency/building-energy-data>

⁴ Benchmarking and Energy Savings:

https://www.energystar.gov/sites/default/files/buildings/tools/DataTrends_Savings_20121002.pdf

Additional benefits of benchmarking and BPS may include:

- Improved air quality and public health from reduced GHG emissions
- Reduced demand on the electric grid from decreases in energy use
- Increased eligibility for Federal and utility support programs from energy efficiency improvements
- More effective progress towards economic and workforce goals of the city

• Will the City include the public in the creation and adoption of benchmarking policies or BPS?

The City of Cincinnati will be conducting an inclusive stakeholder engagement process for feedback to help determine and understand impacts of detailed targets, compliance mechanisms, and support programs. A website has been created to provide more information on the stakeholder engagement process and to solicit feedback from throughout the community.

• How will local businesses be impacted by benchmarking/BPS?

Local businesses can also benefit from benchmarking and BPS. Businesses that rent commercial building space in benchmarked and BPS-compliant buildings may see savings on monthly utility bills, experience increased thermal comfort, and benefit from better indoor air quality. Job creation in energy management, auditing, engineering, and the building improvement and construction trades is frequently seen in cities with these policies. The City encourages business participation in the stakeholder engagement process so these issues can be best addressed.

• Will a BPS harm development or developers?

BPS affect existing buildings only, and there is no evidence to support that passing a BPS will harm future development. BPS will improve the quality of existing buildings, making the City more desirable to businesses through a more affordable, efficient, and healthy building stock. The City encourages developer participation in the stakeholder engagement process so questions and concerns can be incorporated into policy development.

• How will building owners be impacted by benchmarking/BPS?

Building owners will likely see benefits from benchmarking and BPS. Buildings with better efficiency ratings tend to increase in property value, reduce tenant complaints, and experience lower utility costs⁵.

Many building owners already see the benefits in tracking and recording their properties' energy use and making investments where it makes sense. A benchmarking ordinance helps owners take a closer look at how their buildings use energy; owners that regularly track building energy use are the ones who typically save the most.

⁵ Better Resale Value: <https://www.energystar.gov/newhomes/features-benefits/better-resale-value>

BPS is a market-based solution with ingrained flexibility and freedom of choice for compliance. Building owners will be able to balance the manner of compliance with the most reasonable approach for their building. Many buildings may not require capital investments to meet BPS targets at all through the identification of low- and no-cost efficiency improvements. Building owners and managers will have the flexibility to make investments based on their unique knowledge of building operations, planned expenditures, financing cycles, and experience. Improvements can be physical or operational at the building owner's discretion.

The City hopes to leverage existing financing mechanisms and incentives to assist building owners in making desired capital improvements. The City encourages building owners and managers to participate in the stakeholder engagement process to understand their needs and opportunities to develop a mutually beneficial policy.

- **How do we address affordable housing?**

Many community members are likely to see benefits from the implementation of benchmarking and BPS. Renters in large multifamily buildings may see savings on monthly utility bills, experience increased thermal comfort and receive health benefits from better indoor air quality. However, it is important to understand the specific needs and concerns of Cincinnati's affordable housing communities to understand potential impacts. Hardship compliance plans, emissions investment funds, and extended compliance cycles are all examples that other cities have utilized with their BPS. The City encourages affordable housing residents, tenants, and other interested parties to participate in the stakeholder engagement process so these issues can be heard and addressed.

- **Which buildings will be impacted by benchmarking and BPS?**

The City is exploring various approaches to BPS policies, and is seeking stakeholder feedback as they finalize the requirements for buildings to be covered by benchmarking and BPS. One common way that determine which buildings are included in the BPS is by building size, but it has not been determined that the City will take that approach. Stakeholder feedback and the ability to meet climate goals will impact the covered buildings characteristics. Updates will be provided on the City website when a covered buildings list is created.

- **What kind of support will be provided?**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency provides a free, user-friendly, online benchmarking service through ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager⁶, which is already utilized by the City of Columbus for its benchmarking ordinance. The City of Cincinnati plans to provide free workshops, webinars and technical assistance, and is exploring additional options to help owners and managers comply. Visit the City of Cincinnati's website for updates.

⁶ ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager: <https://portfoliomanager.energystar.gov/pm/login>

Building Performance Standard

Stakeholder Engagement Plan: Cincinnati

Objective

To gather feedback regarding the development of a Building Performance Standard (BPS) policy in Cincinnati. Such a policy aligns with many city goals including improved health and energy efficiency. Stakeholder engagement and feedback are critical in ensuring a comprehensive and effective Cincinnati BPS policy.

Background

- **Green Cincinnati Plan (GCP):** Updated in 2023, the Plan aims for a 50% carbon reduction by 2030 and full carbon neutrality by 2050. BPS development will help achieve these targets by reducing building emissions and enhancing energy efficiency.
- **Key goals and actions of the GCP aligned with BPS:**
 - Reduce building emissions by 30% by 2030.
 - Improve building performance by implementing policies and setting standards.
 - Reduce the number of households experiencing energy poverty by 10% 2028.
 - Increase energy efficiency in buildings by growing and expanding existing programs and supporting investment in energy efficiency.

Project Team:

- University of Cincinnati
- Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (MEEA)
- Go Sustainable Energy
- Power a Clean Future Ohio (PCFO)
- City of Cincinnati

Goals for the Stakeholder Process:

- Gather a broad range of perspectives for feedback.
- Ensure inclusiveness and transparency.
- Understand and address local concerns.
- Identify improvement opportunities for policy language throughout.
- Embed Cincinnati community values in policy.

Key stakeholders for BPS can include city officials and agencies, utilities, building owners, developers, construction industry representatives, community and/or environmental organizations, and/or labor, workforce, and economic development groups.

Stakeholder Engagement Process (SEP)

1. **SEP Kick-off and Internal Meetings:** Inform government staff and City Council on the objectives of a BPS and begin internal meetings.
2. **Informational Webpage:** Create a public resource to provide project updates and gather feedback on the BPS.
3. **One-on-One Stakeholder Meetings:** Inform and meet with key stakeholders.
4. **Establish Advisory Group:** Form and meet with a stakeholder leadership group.
5. **Establish Stakeholder Committee:** Build broader stakeholder engagement group for community feedback from key sectors.
6. **Public Meetings:** Host informational and listening sessions for public input.
7. **Draft Policy:** Develop policy drafts incorporating stakeholder feedback.
8. **Council Presentation:** Present initial findings to City Council before the Summer 2025 break.
9. **Additional Public Meetings:** Gather input on proposed BPS compliance pathways, mechanisms and applicable, related draft language.
10. **Final Internal Feedback:** Review policy mechanisms with government staff and City Council.
11. **Finalize Policy Language:** Summarize feedback, finalize language for rulemaking and/or enforcement mechanisms.
12. **Final Council Presentation:** Present to City Council for adoption.

Expected Outcomes of a BPS:

- A well-informed BPS policy that reflects Cincinnati stakeholder concerns.
- Enhanced building performance and energy efficiency.
- Reduction in emissions and monthly energy bills.
- Community support through an inclusive, transparent stakeholder process.
- Achieve capital savings across BPS building stock.
- Increased employment opportunities and related training through BPS implementation.

Building performance standards in Cincinnati: Progress update and stakeholder engagement

Amanda Webb, University of Cincinnati

Alison Lindburg, Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (MEEA)

Kelley Lauginiger, Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (MEEA)

Cincinnati Environmental Advisory Board

Cincinnati, OH

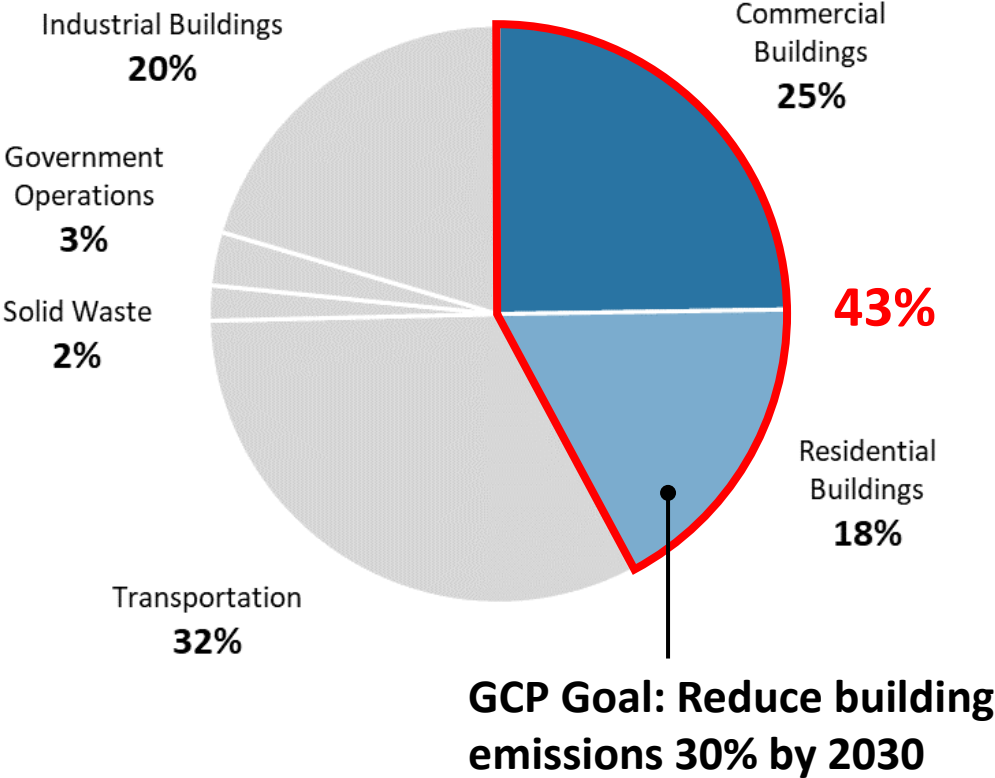
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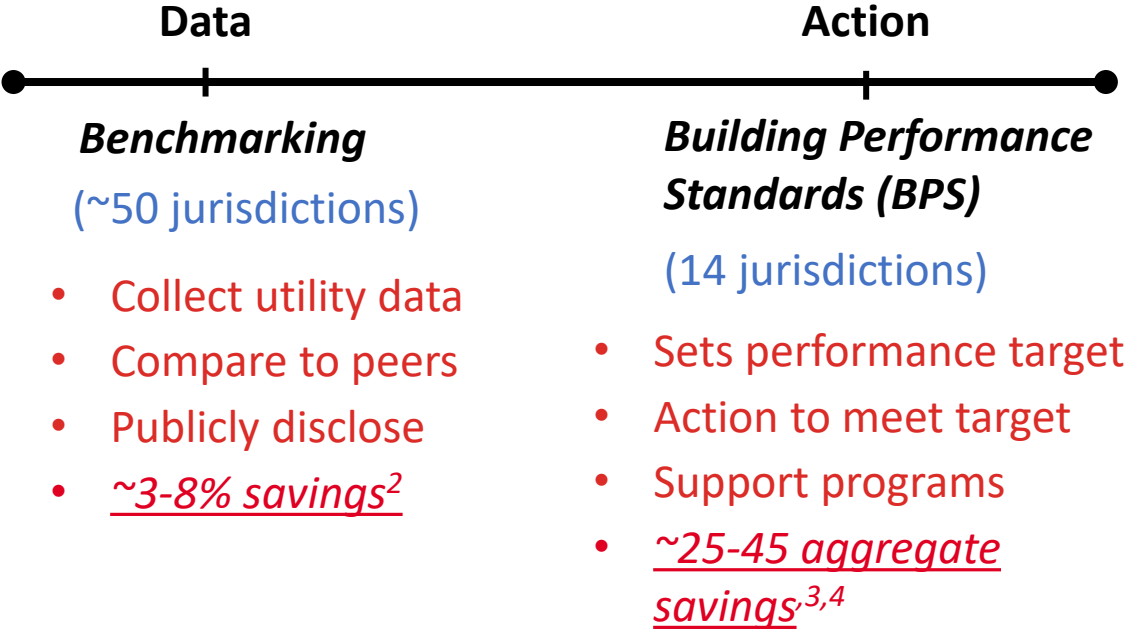
1. Overview and rationale for DOE RECI project
2. Project progress and current timeline
3. Review Cincinnati's Stakeholder Engagement Plan
4. Q+A

Addressing existing buildings is critical to meeting the 2023 Green Cincinnati Plan (GCP) climate goals

2022 Cincinnati Carbon Emissions¹



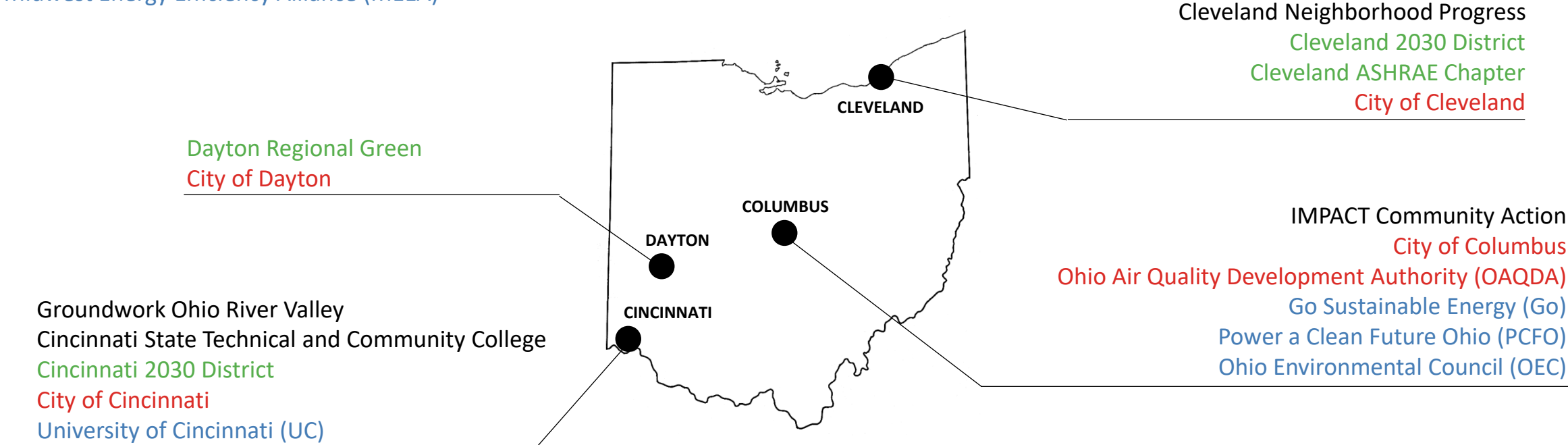
Existing Building Decarbonization Spectrum



¹2023 Green Cincinnati Plan; ²Mims et al. (2017); ³Webb and McConnell (2023); ⁴Nadel and Hinge (2020)

The goal of the OH RECI project is to develop cost-optimal, equitable BPS in Ohio's large cities

REGIONAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY ORGANIZATION (REEO)
 Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (MEEA)



■ Technical Providers
 ■ Local Government and State Agency
 ■ Building Owners and Design Professionals
 ■ Community-Based Organizations and Workforce Development

The project team has made progress across all major areas of work for all four cities

Stakeholder Engagement

- Monthly Technical Advisory Group (TAG) meetings held
- Draft and Final Stakeholder Engagement Plans created
- Biweekly Engagement Planning meetings held

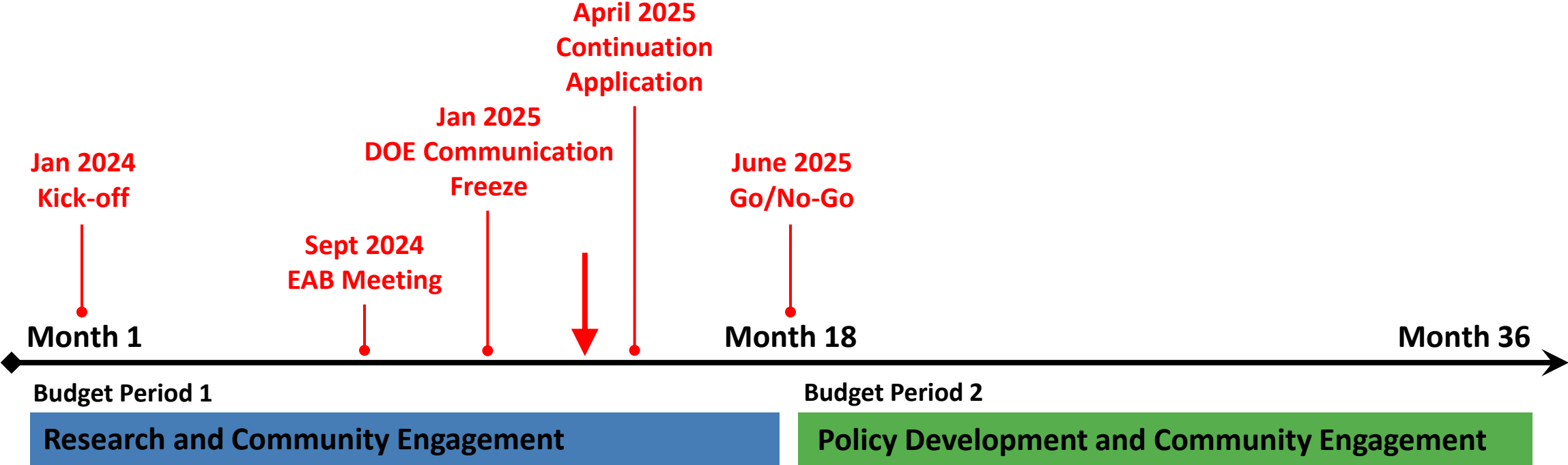
Data Analysis

- Utility data collected for 6 out of 12 utilities
- Building stock data collected and analyzed
- Utility data and stock data linked for Cincinnati
- Retrofit cost data analyzed

Legal, Financial, and Workforce Opportunities

- Discovery meetings held
- List of opportunities developed
- BPS Pathways and Opportunities Plan drafted

The project team is currently proceeding under uncertainty



Stakeholder Engagement Overview + Plans

- *Cincinnati Stakeholder Engagement Plan: [here](#)*

Goals for the Stakeholder Process

Gather a broad range
of perspectives for
feedback

Ensure multiple
engagement
opportunities +
transparency

Understand + address
local concerns

Identify improvement
opportunities for
policy language
throughout

Embed Cincinnati
community values in
policy

Stakeholder Engagement Plan Timeline

		Start Date	End Date	Task Lead
1	Meet with internal government staff and select city council members	6/3/2024	3/31/2025	City
2	Create informational webpage	1/1/2025	3/31/2025	MEEA
3	Meet one-on-one with highly-impacted and key stakeholders	2/1/2025	3/31/2026	City
4	Establish and meet with a stakeholder engagement Advisory Group	2/1/2025	3/31/2025	City
5	Establish and meet with a larger Stakeholder Committee	4/1/2025	10/31/2025	City
6	Host public meetings to collect feedback on policy design	4/1/2025	6/20/2025	City
7	Compile feedback and create draft policy language	4/14/2025	6/20/2025	City
8	Present to City Council	6/2/2025	6/27/2025	City
9	Host public meeting to collect feedback on compliance pathways and mechanisms	9/1/2025	10/3/2025	City
10	Meet with internal government staff and City Council representatives on policy mechanisms	12/1/2025	1/30/2026	City
11	Summarize feedback and finalize policy language for rulemaking and enforcement	1/1/2026	1/28/2026	City
12	Present to City Council	1/30/2026	3/30/2026	City

Benefits of a Building Performance Standard:


Lowered Energy Use = Lower Operating Costs and Utility Bills

City	Energy Savings	Cost Savings
Chicago	5.2% reduction (2014 - 2018)	\$15.1 million per year
Minneapolis	5.2% reduction (2014 - 2018)	\$21 million per year
Denver	4.5% reduction (2017 - 2018)	\$13.5 million per year

Additional Benefits of benchmarking and BPS may include:

- Energy Poverty
- Workforce Development
- Job Training and Employment Opportunities for Youth
- Growing the Green Economy
- Community Outreach

BPS Impacts: Green Cincinnati Plan Focus Areas



FOCUS AREA
Buildings & Energy
Ensuring energy efficient buildings and clean energy for a healthy, equitable, and resilient city.



Energy Efficiency

Goal

Reduce building emissions 30% from 2021 levels by 2030.

BASELINE YEAR(S)
2021

Strategy

Decrease energy usage in new and existing buildings through adoption of energy efficiency and electrification technologies.

BPS can also positively impact other GCP focus areas:

- Energy Poverty
- Workforce Development
- Job Training and Employment Opportunities for Youth
- Growing the Green Economy
- Community Outreach

There is an urgent need for policies that address **existing buildings** in order to meet our goals

Thank you! Questions?



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