

Building Owner's Playbook

Building owners are the primary decision makers of all major building-related projects and as such, set the stage for all to follow. As an owner, your approval, leadership, and ultimate allocation of resources (be it financial or human capital), is critical to creating and maintaining energy efficient, high-value buildings in the City and helping transform what constitutes business as usual. The future of buildings is about energy efficiency, automation, electrification, and responsiveness to both customer and investor demand for sustainability. To remain competitive, building owners need to showcase leadership for and cultivate commitment to high-performance buildings. While upfront cost is a commonly cited barrier to better buildings, the long-term costs of inaction, for both the owner and society, are greater.

Take action on your building's performance

- **Understand the latest regulations.** Ensure that you are up to speed on the latest rules and regulations about the City's Building Energy Performance Standards (BEPS) and updated building codes, and how they might impact your properties.
- **Check your building's performance.** The City requires benchmarking data for privately owned buildings and municipal buildings $\geq 50,000$ sq. ft. That information is made publicly available and is published on the City's Covered Buildings List. It's important to verify that your benchmarking data is accurate, because your building's performance data will determine whether or not you are compliant with BEPS.
- **Understand how your building is performing against your peers.** The BEPS standard places your building in a local cohort of buildings of the same type and establishes a performance level based on the 35 percentile performance level within the group. Where your building falls relative to the BEPS should give you a clear sense of how your building is performing relative to peers. There are two additional options to compare your building's performance against your peers.
 - Compare your building's Site Energy Use Intensity (EUI) to neighboring buildings by searching the published Covered Buildings Database on the City's website.
 - If you haven't received it, request your building's benchmarking scorecard by e-mailing the Building Division at benchmarking@stlouis-mo.gov. If you have submitted benchmarking data to the City, your scorecard shows your historic performance relative to BEPS.
- **Talk to your on-site staff.** Having a dialog with your building engineer, property manager, and/or facility manager will enable you to get a full picture about how your building is performing, how the systems are being maintained, and what potential options for improvement are.
- **Get an energy audit.** Hire an expert to conduct an energy audit to identify all possible areas for performance improvement. Depending on how in depth your audit is, this can also include information about cost and ROI to aid in decision making.
- **Develop a goal or target for your building.** Once you understand how your building is performing, it's important to determine your goals for your building's performance. This will set up the pathway for all future, related work. It's important to ensure that all internal stakeholders and decision makers agree to the goals being set and that they are committed to executing a plan to achieve them. For buildings in the City of St. Louis, the goal should be to meet or exceed the Building Performance Standard.
- **Communicate project goals across your team.** It takes a team to properly operate and manage a building. It's important that all stakeholders—asset managers, property managers, building engineers, and brokers among them—understand the goals you have set and your expectations of them.



- **Talk to your tenants.** Talking to your tenants about their role and responsibility in ensuring your building's performance is imperative. This endeavor is challenging with commercial tenants (as they can consume up to 80% of a building's energy use), and it can be even more challenging for residential buildings with either owned or rented units. Regardless, communication among building users is crucial for helping to maintain or improve building performance.
- **Develop a plan for tenant turnover.** When new residential or commercial tenants come to your building, or as leases get renewed, review policies and best practices with them.
 - For residential units, this could include upgrading lighting or appliances to more efficient models and technology.
 - For commercial tenants, this could include lease language that contains green lease provisions. It could also be a chance to update your owner's project manual to include updated requirements for new tenants during build out.
- **Select the right vendor.** Review our **"Where Do I Start" guide** to determine the vendor—both the type and the qualifications—that will enable you to meet your performance goals. If you have previously set environmental, social, and governance (ESG) goals for your company, this is also the time to use your economic hiring power to not only achieve your environmental goals, but your social ones as well.
- **Get the financing that you need.** There are a multitude of options available for building owners to finance improvements to their building's performance. You can search for available options, based on your scope of work, in our Finance Navigator.
- **Verify and maintain building performance.** Verifying building performance is not a one-time endeavor and requires on-going dedication. Consult the Energy Efficiency Checklist for details. This also means ensuring that your on-site staff has the training and resources they need to keep the building running at its best.

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