

Madison Mayor Rhodes-Conway: City of Madison and partners announce plans for program to cut carbon emissions in commercial buildings

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Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway, Alder Syed Abbas, and Alder Tag Evers were joined by community leaders from 350 Wisconsin, Elevate Energy, and others to announce plans to develop a new Building Energy Savings program. The program aims to help commercial building owners identify opportunities to increase the energy efficiency of their buildings, which currently account for one third of community-wide greenhouse gas emissions. The program will include energy benchmarking and periodic tune-ups for large commercial buildings and other supporting initiatives.

“Improving energy efficiency is one of the most important things we can all do to combat climate change,” said Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway. “We are committed to working with the Madison community to tailor a program for Madison that benefits building owners and tenants.”

The City of Madison has ambitious climate and energy goals – aiming to reach 100% renewable energy and net zero carbon emissions for City operations by 2030 and community-wide by 2050. While ambitious, these goals are also necessary to avoid the catastrophic impacts that climate change could have on all Madisonians. Reaching these goals means cutting emissions across all sectors, including buildings. The City is leading by example to cut building emissions. Since 2015, the

City has benchmarked energy use at its facilities and used that information to reduce energy waste through operations changes, transitioning to LED lighting, upgrades to HVAC equipment and more. [Fourteen City facilities have achieved LEED Certification](#), and 6 facilities are in the process of being certified.

However, Madison cannot achieve its climate goals through action at City facilities alone. It is critical that the whole community be part of the solution. “This is an opportunity for Madison’s business community to stand alongside the City and commit to real climate action,” says District 13 Alder Tag Evers. “I encourage all business and community leaders to work with City staff on how to maximize the benefits of this program.”

With this new program, Madison will join more than 40 other state and local governments across the country with policies and programs aimed at making their existing building stock more energy efficient and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. “We see more and more cities like Madison adopting building energy benchmarking, tune-up, and similar policies because they work,” said District 15 Alder Grant Foster. “These tools help building owners choose a path toward greater energy efficiency that’s right for them.”

Building energy benchmarking is a tool to measure and track annual energy use; it provides information that helps building owners and managers make more informed decisions about building energy use and efficiency actions. Similar to tuning up a car, building tune-ups check and adjust building energy systems, like lighting sensors and HVAC controls, once every few years to make sure everything is operating optimally. Tune-ups catch un-noticed issues that can waste a lot of energy. These measures can reduce energy use by 15% or more.

“The Building Energy Savings Program is a win-win approach for the climate and our local businesses,” said District 12 Alder Syed Abbas. “Improving the performance of commercial buildings not only reduces energy waste, it lowers utility bills for

building owners and tenants and supports our local green economy.”

Many local institutions and businesses in Madison are already taking actions to improve the energy efficiency of their buildings and combat climate change. Among those leaders is UW Health. “UW Health is committed to energy efficiency, which is why we benchmark energy performance in our portfolio of buildings and look for opportunities to improve efficiency that align with the great care we provide to our patients,” said Mary Statz, Director Energy Management & Sustainability. “This is a priority for us, because improving our sustainability and reducing our greenhouse gas emissions contributes to the health of our communities.”

District 5 Alder Regina Vidaver agrees, “The Building Energy Savings Program will help make Madison’s buildings more comfortable and healthy for building users and tenants, while also improving air quality for the broader community.”

Compass Properties tracks energy use throughout their portfolio of commercial buildings as a way to monitor how the building’s systems are performing and make data-informed decisions. “It’s an easy process,” explained Todd Greenwald, Executive Vice President of Real Estate at

Compass. “This is an essential step for any commercial property when exploring ways to reach sustainable building operations and management. If a building owner tracks energy use solely to deliver a positive impact on overall energy cost that should be reason enough!”

The City of Madison is committed to collaboratively designing the Building Energy Savings Program with the Madison community. The City will hold a virtual public information meeting on Wednesday, July 13 at 1:30p and a series of workshops to gather public input on specific aspects of the program design on July 20, July 27, and August 3 at 1p.

Visit the registration page to sign up for the public information meeting and workshops:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/368559039007>