User Guide for Local Energy Efficiency Self-Scoring Tool, Version 2.0 Beta

David Ribeiro and Tyler Bailey

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529 14th Street NW, Suite 600, Washington, DC 20045

Phone: (202) 507-4000 • Twitter: @ACEEEDC

Facebook.com/myACEEE • aceee.org

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About the Authors

David Ribeiro joined ACEEE in the spring of 2013. He conducts research on energy efficiency implementation at the local level, including lead-by-example strategies and the interconnection between efficiency and community resilience. He is also the lead author of the *City Energy Efficiency Scorecard* and contributes to the Local Policy Database.

Tyler Bailey is an intern with the Utilities, State, and Local Policy team at ACEEE and contributes to research projects focusing on state- and city-level energy efficiency efforts.

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ACEEE is solely responsible for the content of this guide and tool.

Quick Start Guide

The Local Energy Efficiency Self-Scoring Tool, Version 2.0 Beta lets you score a community of any size on its energy efficiency efforts. You do so by evaluating your community's locally enacted or implemented activities across local government operations, community-wide initiatives, buildings policies, energy and water utility policies, and transportation policies. Through the scoring process, you can benchmark the community's energy efficiency efforts against other communities of similar size that have shown leadership on energy efficiency. Not only does benchmarking put communities' scores in perspective, but it can introduce you to innovative energy practices that have proved successful in other communities. You can also use the tool's benchmarking to identify your community's strengths in energy efficiency policymaking as well as areas needing improvement.

You can download the Self-Scoring Tool at aceee.org/local-policy/city-scorecard.

Layout of the Local Energy Efficiency Self-Scoring Tool

The tool consists of seven Excel worksheets.

Introduction. This landing page discusses the tool's aims and has brief instructions for using it.

Policy area worksheets. Five worksheets correspond to the areas in which you evaluate your community's energy efficiency policies: local government operations, community-wide initiatives, buildings, energy and water utilities, and transportation. You respond to questions on each of these worksheets to score your community.

Analysis. Our analysis displays your community's scores and benchmarks them against the scores of peer communities.

The following instructions are a concise guide you can reference while using the Self-Scoring Tool. We recommend that you review this entire user guide before engaging with the tool so you fully understand its goals and features.

Step 1. Read the information on the Introduction worksheet and enter the community information requested.

Step 2. Proceed to a policy area worksheet (such as Local government operations) and glance over the metrics and questions in Columns A and B. You can find comments regarding many of the questions in Column B by moving the cursor over a given cell.

Step 3. Return to the top of the worksheet and provide any needed preliminary information. You need to do this step for the Buildings policies, Utility policies, and Transportation policies worksheets. If you do not provide the preliminary information, there will be scoring errors on the worksheets.

Step 4. After you provide the preliminary information (if necessary), respond to the first question posed in Column B by answering it in your own words in the answer column, Column C. It is important to complete this column fully by recording the pertinent policy or program names, local government ordinances, or other information. This data will allow us to verify that you scored your community correctly.

- We recommend that you review the scoring criteria found on the drop-down menus in Column D before answering questions to understand how the questions relate to the methodology.
- If you do not have the data to answer a question, see Column F for a recommended data source.
- Cells in Column C that are **medium-blue** are locked. In these cases, the cell values will be automatically filled in from information you previously provided.

Step 5. After answering a question in Column C, select a scoring criterion from the drop-down menu in Column D that best fits your answer in Column C. Once you select the scoring criterion, a score will be displayed in the score column, Column E.

- By selecting a scoring criterion in Column D, you will unlock the scores of peer communities for that metric on the Analysis worksheet. Because peer community scores are unlocked as you answer each question, the only way to see total scores for peer communities is to fully complete the Self-Scoring Tool.

Step 6. After working through the questions in one policy area worksheet, go to the next worksheet and complete it in the same way as outlined in steps 3 through 6. Repeat this until you have completed all policy area worksheets.

- It is important to answer all the questions on each policy area worksheet. This is the only way to get a comprehensive assessment and benchmarking of energy efficiency efforts.

Step 7. After you complete your community's scoring, go to the Analysis worksheet to review the total score and see a comparison of your community's score with eight already scored peer communities.

All analysis is based on the metrics and questions to which you have provided responses. You will receive a detailed benchmarking of your community's energy efficiency efforts against the efforts of peer communities only if you answer a majority of the questions in the tool. We provide a more detailed discussion of the tool's analytical functions in the instructions that follow in this user guide.

Introduction

The 2015 City Energy Efficiency Scorecard rated 51 of the largest cities in the United States on the basis of their policies and leadership in advancing energy efficiency (Ribeiro et al. 2015).[1] The *Scorecard* has more than 50 metrics evaluating city efforts across local government operations, community initiatives, building policies, energy and water utilities, and transportation policies. The *City Scorecard* applied these metrics to large cities, but the same metrics can be valuable to small and medium-size communities trying to reduce energy waste.

With these ideas in mind, we translated the metrics of the *2015 City Scorecard* into the Excel-based Local Energy Efficiency Self-Scoring Tool, Version 2.0 Beta. You can use the tool to see how your community is performing in various policy areas. This lets you not only benchmark its current energy efficiency efforts, but also reevaluate its efforts by reusing the tool when the community implements new policies.

The tool can inform the energy policy decisions of smaller local governments, which by nature may be more resource constrained, and assist them in prioritizing future investments. The Self-Scoring Tool also compares a community's score with the efficiency efforts of other small and medium-size communities. These "peer community" comparisons put your community's scores into better perspective. You can use ACEEE's Local Energy Efficiency Policy Calculator along with the Self-Scoring Tool to further understand the concrete costs and benefits of pursuing some of these policies and programs (Mackres et al. 2015).[2]

This tool gives a policymaker, stakeholder, student, or informed citizen the opportunity to score a community's energy efficiency efforts in an easy, transparent way. The following are some potential uses of the tool:

- Sustainability officers can benchmark municipal energy efficiency efforts to get a better understanding of their progress and inform future policy decisions.
- Nonprofit organizations can learn about new energy efficiency programs and policies to consider for their communities, which they can advocate for or work to implement.
- Informed citizens can measure and track the energy efficiency progress of their community and learn about the strengths and weaknesses of current programs, in order to keep local officials accountable for these efforts.

After scoring your community, we encourage you to submit your results to ACEEE by sending the completed Self-Scoring Tool to cityscorecard@aceee.org. Resources permitting, we will publish the results of leading and innovative communities in our State

[1] The *City Energy Efficiency Scorecard* can be downloaded at aceee.org/research-report/u1502.
[2] The Local Energy Efficiency Policy Calculator is available at aceee.org/local-energy-efficiency-policy-calculator-leep-c.

and Local Policy Database.[3] This database lets us publicly recognize municipalities and share information on their activities with other local governments (ACEEE 2015b).

When publishing or citing your results from the Self-Scoring Tool, please use the following format:

> [User's name]. [Year]. Based on analysis of self-reported data using the ACEEE Local Energy Efficiency Self-Scoring Tool (2015).

Please do not attribute the results and scores for a particular jurisdiction to ACEEE, unless you have submitted the data to ACEEE and we have verified the scores.

There are no version requirements for using the Self-Scoring Tool on a PC or Mac computer. The tool should work on all versions of Microsoft Excel. If you encounter any issues while using the tool, please contact us.

Instructions

The Self-Scoring Tool gives you an opportunity to catalog the scope of locally enacted energy efforts and benchmark energy efficiency policies against peers. It takes time to learn how to properly use the Self-Scoring Tool, collect the pertinent data on energy efficiency activity, and subsequently use the tool to score the community. The total time it takes depends on the complexity of your community's energy efficiency policies and the level of familiarity you have with the community's policy landscape.

TOOL FEATURES

Peer Communities

Because we have already scored the largest cities in the United States in the *City Scorecard*, we envision small and medium-size localities to be the primary users of the tool. To ensure an apples-to-apples comparison of these communities with others of similar size, we have scored eight localities beyond those in the *City Scorecard* to serve as peers. We selected these communities on the basis of several factors, including population, geographical diversity, and leadership in energy efficiency programs and policies. Table 1 lists each of these communities and their population. You can see their scores in the Analysis worksheet of the actual tool.

Table 1. Peer communities

Peer community	2014 population
Arlington County, VA	226,908
Boulder, CO	105,112
Burlington, VT	42,211
Charlottesville, VA	45,593

[3] The State and Local Policy Database is available at database.aceee.org.

Peer community	2014 population
Knoxville, TN	184,281
Lawrence, KS	92,763
Madison, WI	245,691
Park City, UT	8,058

Source: Census 2015

Data Source Recommendations

To complete the Self-Scoring Tool, you will need to collect information from different data sources. To streamline this process, we recommend sources alongside metrics in the tool so you can locate relevant data quickly. In some cases, central data sources—such as Building Codes Assistance Project data sets and the National Transit Database—contain the information you need to address questions in the tool. For these metrics, we provide web links directly to the sources. We have also provided comments within the tool to explain how to retrieve data once you have clicked through to the pertinent website.

For many metrics, we recommend compiling "community research" because no central data source addresses those metrics. When we scored the eight peer communities, we gathered much of this information directly from the local government offices responsible for developing and implementing energy plans, sustainability plans, climate action plans, or greenhouse gas inventories. When conducting community research, it may be easier for you to get the data you need by following a few steps we often use.

- Investigate whether the community has a comprehensive energy or climate plan that addresses energy efficiency–related topics.
- Conduct a simple web search or browse your community's local government website to determine which agency or department administers energy efficiency goals or programs.
- If no one agency or department oversees energy efficiency policy, you may need to ask multiple departments for information.
- Finally, it may be easier to contact an energy manager or sustainability staff member directly. This person will be able to guide you to the appropriate information or answer your questions.

INTRODUCTION WORKSHEET

When opening the Self-Scoring Tool, you will start on the Introduction worksheet, as shown in figure 1.

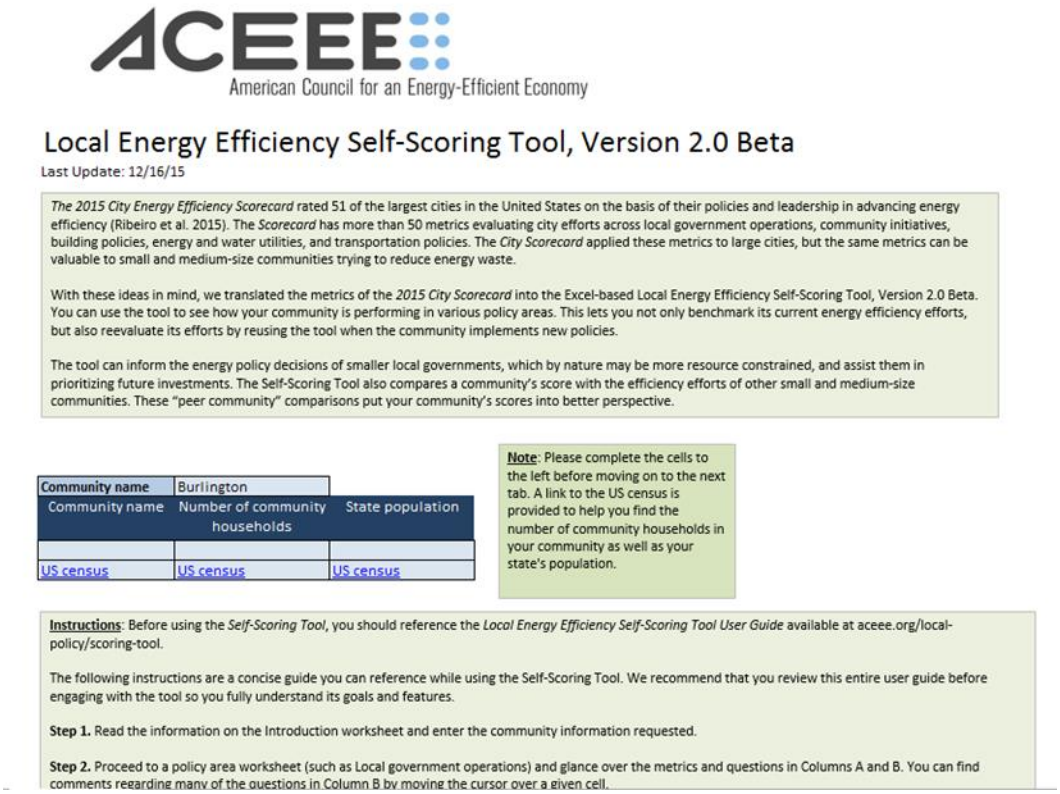
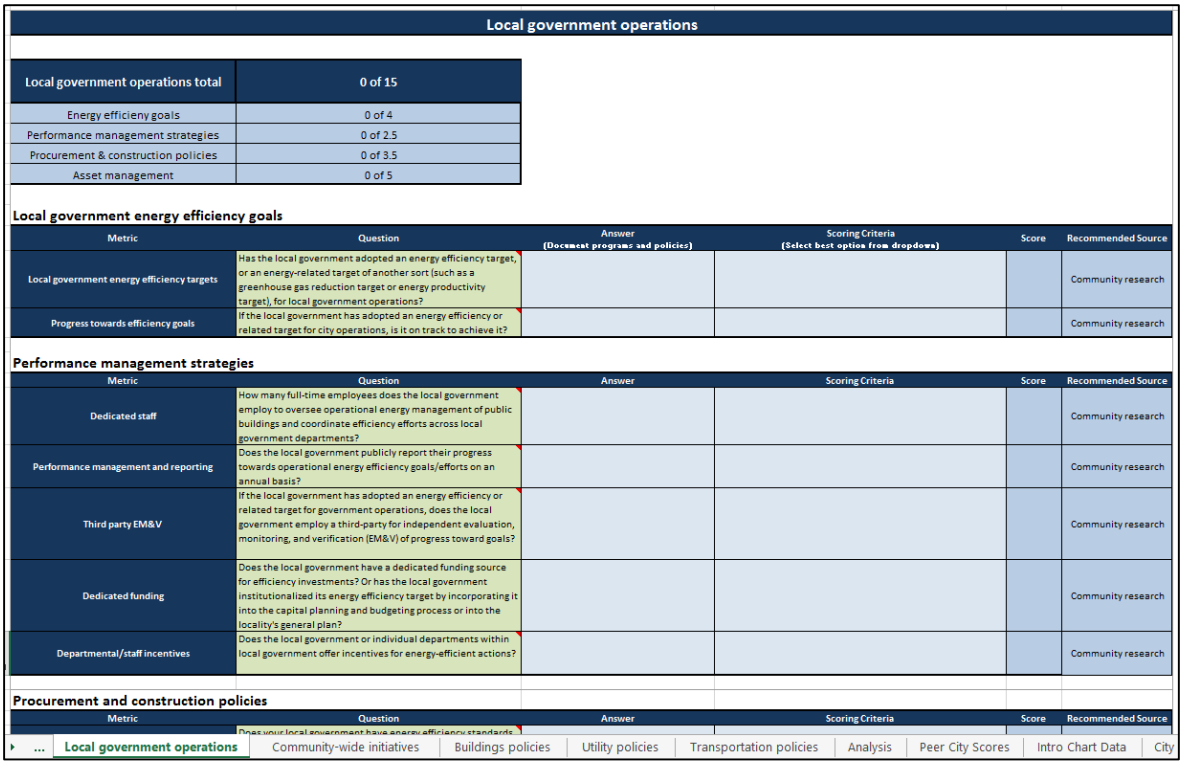


Figure 1. Introduction worksheet

Before going to other worksheets, please read the introduction and instructions on this worksheet. They give important highlights from this user guide and suggest how to best employ the tool. After reading those notes, please complete the basic community information requested on the worksheet, such as population and number of households. The tool will use these values in calculations that follow.

POLICY AREA WORKSHEETS

After reading and completing the Introduction worksheet, you will choose one of the five policy area worksheets (Local government operations, Community-wide initiatives, Buildings policies, Utility policies, and Transportation policies) to begin scoring your community. Each worksheet is set up as a multiple-choice test in that you are given a set of questions, workspace to respond to the questions, and multiple-choice options. Figure 2 shows one of the policy area worksheets.



Local government operations

Local government operations total	0 of 15
Energy efficieny goals	0 of 4
Performance management strategies	0 of 2.5
Procurement & construction policies	0 of 3.5
Asset management	0 of 5

Local government energy efficiency goals

Metric	Question	Answer (Document programs and policies)	Scoring Criteria (Select best option from dropdown)	Score	Recommended Source
Local government energy efficiency targets	Has the local government adopted an energy efficiency target, or an energy-related target of another sort (such as a greenhouse gas reduction target or energy productivity target), for local government operations?				Community research
Progress towards efficiency goals	If the local government has adopted an energy efficiency or related target for city operations, is it on track to achieve it?				Community research

Performance management strategies

Metric	Question	Answer	Scoring Criteria	Score	Recommended Source
Dedicated staff	How many full-time employees does the local government employ to oversee operational energy management of public buildings and coordinate efficiency efforts across local government departments?				Community research
Performance management and reporting	Does the local government publicly report their progress towards operational energy efficiency goals/efforts on an annual basis?				Community research
Third party EM&V	If the local government has adopted an energy efficiency or related target for government operations, does the local government employ a third-party for independent evaluation, monitoring, and verification (EM&V) of progress toward goals?				Community research
Dedicated funding	Does the local government have a dedicated funding source for efficiency investments? Or has the local government institutionalized its energy efficiency target by incorporating it into the capital planning and budgeting process or into the locality's general plan?				Community research
Departmental/staff incentives	Does the local government or individual departments within local government offer incentives for energy-efficient actions?				Community research

Procurement and construction policies

Metric	Question	Answer	Scoring Criteria	Score	Recommended Source

... | Local government operations | Community-wide initiatives | Buildings policies | Utility policies | Transportation policies | Analysis | Peer City Scores | Intro Chart Data | City

Figure 2. Local government operations worksheet

You need to provide additional information on the Buildings, Utility, and Transportation worksheets. We include introductory questions at the top of these worksheets in a box labeled "Preliminary information." You must answer these questions before completing other questions in the section. If you do not answer them, there will be errors in scoring.

Questions on these worksheets will change depending on the preliminary information you provide. If the text in a cell changes to "not applicable," skip that question.

The following is the column layout for the policy area worksheets:

- Column A: Metric. This column identifies the specific metric to which the question in Column B refers.
- Column B: Question. This column has a specific question related to the metric listed in Column A.
- Column C: Answer. This column has a cell where you can key in your answer to the question posed in Column B. It is important to fully complete this column in order to record the specific policy or program information for your community. You should record policy or program names, local government ordinances, or other references in these cells. In a few instances, you cannot alter cells in Column C. We have colored these cells **medium-blue**. In these cases, the value in the cell will be automatically filled in from information in previous inputs.
- Column D: Scoring criteria. Here you filter your answer in Column C into one of ACEEE's multiple-choice scoring criteria. You click on the cell to unlock a drop-down menu and select the option that best fits your description in Column C.

- Column E: Score. Once you select an option in Column D, Column E automatically updates to reflect the score for a metric.
- Column F: Recommended source. This column suggests a data source to help you respond to each question.

NAVIGATIONAL FEATURES

To make the tool intuitive and help you use it accurately, we have embedded certain features directly in each policy area worksheet. Please keep these in mind as you use the tool.

- We provide comments for most metrics to help you understand each question's context. You can read comments for a particular metric by holding the cursor over a question, or you can see all comments on a worksheet by selecting the Show All Comments button in the Excel toolbar. Each metric with a comment has a small, red triangle in the upper right-hand corner of the cell.
- We have color-coded all scoring cells in the Self-Scoring Tool to distinguish the locked cells from those you need to address. Respond to the **light-blue** cells; those in **medium-blue** are locked, so you cannot edit them.

ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

The Analysis worksheet automatically analyzes scores as you respond to questions on the policy area worksheets. You can review the Analysis worksheet as you respond to each metric to get a snapshot of how your community is performing.

The highest possible score a community can receive is 100. The points we allocate to each policy area and metric are the same as they are in the *2015 City Scorecard* (Ribeiro et al. 2015). You can find the maximum score for each policy area and metric on the Analysis worksheet. The *2015 City Scorecard* provides more information on each metric and its point allocation.

The purpose of the analysis is to put scores in a comparative framework. While a community's overall score is an objective representation of performance, it is difficult to know if a community is "doing well" without having a means of comparison. For example, if your municipality receives a score of 55, is it failing in its efficiency efforts? Or does a 55 indicate a strong suite of energy efficiency programs? The analysis tries to answer these questions.

The Analysis worksheet has two sections: a high-level snapshot of results and a detailed breakdown of scores. The first feature of this worksheet is a bar graph aggregating your community's score and comparing it with peer communities' scores. Figure 3 displays this bar graph from the tool.

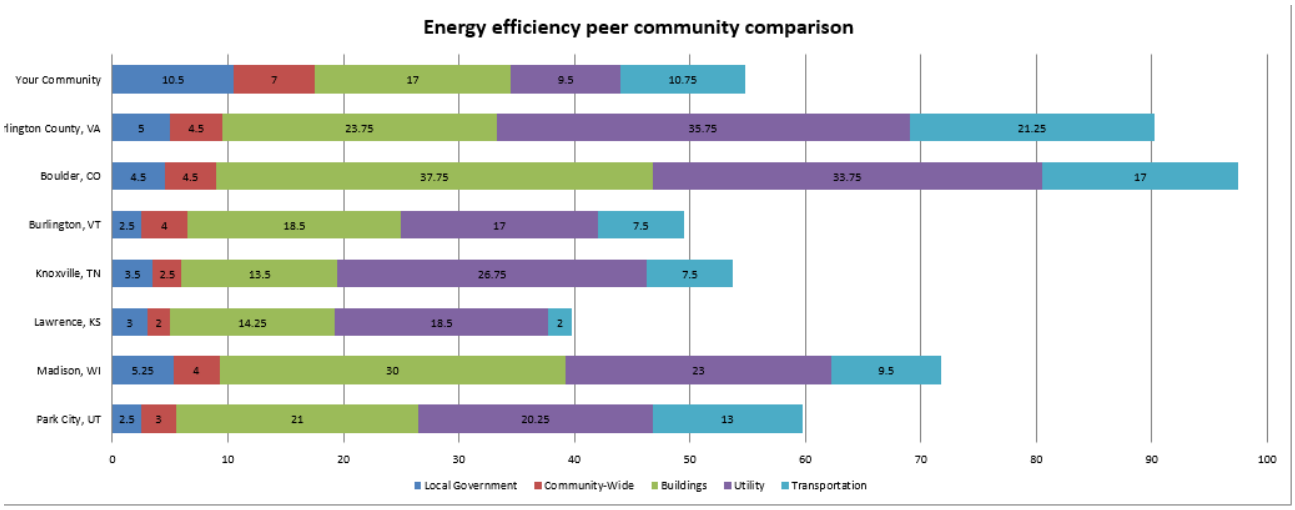


Figure 3. Peer community comparison from analysis worksheet

The bar graph is color coded so you can see both how your community compares with its peers overall and how it compares within each policy area. Because the analysis is based on questions you have responded to, you can see complete peer community scores and fully benchmark scores against peer communities only by responding to all questions in the tool.

The next section is a more detailed analysis. Here you can see each individual metric score for both your community and the peer communities, as shown in figure 4. The highest peer community score for a metric or set of metrics is highlighted in green. This table lets you see how we calculate overall scores and allows you to compare your community with peers on metrics you are particularly interested in.

ACEEE scorecard detailed results											
	Max scores	Burlington	Arlington County, VA	Boulder, CO	Burlington, VT	Charlottesville, VA	Knoxville, TN	Lawrence, KS	Madison, WI	Park City, UT
Grand totals	100	13	21	22	17	16	17	12	20	9
Local government operations	15	7	12	12	10	9	9	6	12	6
Energy efficiency goals	4	1.5	3.0	4.0	2.0	3.0	1.0	3.0	2.0	0.0
Local government energy efficiency targets	2	1.5	2	2	2	2	0.5	2	2	0
Progress toward efficiency targets	2	0	1	2	0	1	0.5	1	0	0
Performance management strategies	2.5	1.0	2.0	2.5	2.0	1.5	2.0	1.0	1.5	1.5
Dedicated staff	0.5	0	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0
Annual public reporting	0.5	0	0	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Third-party EM&V	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0	0.5	0	0	0
Dedicated funding	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0	0.5	0.5
Departmental/staff incentives	0.5	0	0.5	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0.5
Procurement & construction policies	3.5	2.0	3.0	0.5	2.0	1.5	3.0	1.0	3.0	1.5
Public lighting	1	0.5	0.5	0.5	1	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1
New buildings and equipment	1	0.5	1	0	0.5	0.5	1	0	1.5	0.5
Fleet efficiency and vehicle infrastructure	1.5	1	1.5	0	0.5	0.5	1.5	0.5	1	0
Asset management	5	2.5	4.0	5.0	4.0	3.0	3.0	1.0	5.0	2.5
Public workforce	1	0.5	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
Building benchmarking	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Comprehensive retrofit strategy	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0
Sustainable infrastructure policies	2	0	1	2	2	0	0	0	2	0.5
Community-wide initiatives	10	5.5	6.0	8.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	4.0	7.0	2.5
Energy efficiency targets	4	2.0	3.0	4.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	1.0
Community-wide energy efficiency targets	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1
Progress toward goals	2	0	1	2	0	0	1	1	1	0
Performance management strategies	2	1.0	2.0	1.5	2.0	1.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Dedicated staff	0.5	0	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Annual public reporting	0.5	0	0.5	0	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0	0
Dedicated funding	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0	0	0.5	0.5
Independent EM&V	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0	0	0	0	0
Efficient CHP and DE systems	2.5	1.0	1.0	1.5	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.5
DE systems/CHP integration	1.5	1	0	1.5	0	0	0	0	1	0
Planning for future DE and CHP	1	0	1	0	0.5	0	0	0	1	0.5
Mitigation of urban heat islands	1.5	1.5	0.0	1.0	0.5	1.5	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.0
Urban heat island goals	0.5	0.5	0	0	0	0.5	0	0	0	0
Urban heat island strategies	1	1	0	1	0.5	1	1	0	1	0

Figure 4. Detailed results from analysis worksheet

PEER COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS

This is the second time we have scored the peer communities. Most served as peer communities in version 1.0 of the tool, and one scored itself using the tool and shared its results with us. Because this is the second time scoring the communities, we can compare their performance and gauge improvements since their last scoring. Most communities made incremental—and some significant—progress in adopting programs and plans that promote energy efficiency. These improvements are reflected in changes in scores but are not detailed in the user guide. For details on peer communities' policy developments, please review their community-specific pages in the Local Policy Database (ACEEE 2015b).

In the text box below, we describe the policy and program achievements of Arlington County, a leader among the peer communities.

Arlington County's Energy Efficiency Efforts

Arlington County, Virginia, has made strides in its adoption of energy efficiency policies since our last Self-Scoring Tool was released. In this year's scoring, the county has been awarded 67 points, an increase from its score of 55 two years ago. Arlington County has made improvements by adopting incentives to encourage the creation of mixed-use, compact communities. The county has also formally adopted and codified a master transportation plan that includes targets for vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

In addition, the county has enacted green building incentives and adopted an above-code green building requirement for affordable housing. It also scored better in building code enforcement and compliance by dedicating more funds to the building code budget and accepting third-party compliance for structural reviews. It still has both a community-wide and a local government greenhouse gas emissions goal in place. According to results reported, Arlington County is on track to surpass its goal in local government emission reductions.

NEXT STEPS

The tool represents our efforts to translate the scoring methodology of the *City Scorecard* into a scoring tool for smaller communities. This is an updated version of the Local Energy Efficiency Self-Scoring Tool we released in October 2013 (Ribeiro and Mackres 2013).

When you have completed scoring your community, we encourage you to return the results to us by emailing the completed Self-Scoring Tool to cityscorecard@aceee.org. Time and resources permitting, we will verify the data and may include policy information and scores in our State and Local Policy Database. The database details energy efficiency program and policy information for more than 60 jurisdictions and provides an opportunity to recognize your community's efforts (ACEEE 2015b).

After you use the tool, the following are some next steps you could consider:

- In the Appendix, we list the contact information for local government staff members who responded to our requests for data from peer communities. To find out more about programs or policies in these communities, you can contact these individuals. You can also visit our Local Policy Database for more detailed policy and program information about peer community efforts.
- ACEEE has developed resources to help policymakers and program managers engaged in advancing energy efficiency in their communities. These resources help enable action on low-cost, high-impact policies so communities can achieve energy savings. On our website, we provide technical assistance toolkits related to local energy planning, local government efforts to lead by example, local government–utility partnership strategies, and community resilience planning. You can access these toolkits on our Local Technical Assistance Toolkit web page (ACEEE 2015a).
- If you cannot find information on a specific policy or program of interest, let us know. We may be able to develop new toolkits that further address local government needs.

We welcome feedback on the format and functionality of the Self-Scoring Tool and encourage your suggestions on possible improvements. Please send any feedback to cityscorecard@aceee.org.

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Appendix: Peer Community Information

Peer community	State	Energy, climate, or sustainability plan	Data request respondent	Contact information
Arlington County	VA	Community Energy Plan (2013)	John Morrill, Energy Manager, Arlington County Department of Environmental Services	JMorrill@arlingtonva.us
Boulder	CO	Boulder's Climate Commitment (2015)	Elizabeth Vasatka, Business Sustainability Coordinator, City of Boulder	VasatkaE@bouldercolorado.gov
Burlington	VT	Climate Action Plan (2014)	Jennifer Green, Sustainability Coordinator, Burlington Community and Economic Development Office	Jgreen@burlingtonvt.gov
Charlottesville	VA	Charlottesville Emissions Report Update (2012)	Susan Elliott, Charlottesville Climate Protection Program Coordinator	elliottse@charlottesville.org
Knoxville	TN	Knoxville's Energy and Sustainability Work Plan Update (2014)	Erin Gill, Sustainability Director, City of Knoxville	egill@knoxvilletn.gov
Lawrence	KS	Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory Update (2014)	Eileen Horn, Sustainability Coordinator, Douglas County	Ehorn@lawrenceks.org
Madison	WI	The Madison Sustainability Plan: Fostering Environmental, Economic and Social Resilience (2011)	Jeanne Hoffman, Facilities and Sustainability Manager, City of Madison	JHoffman@cityofmadison.com
Park City	UT	Save Our Snow Action Plan (2009)	Matt Abbott, Acting Environmental Sustainability Manager, Park City Municipal Corporation	Matt.Abbott@parkcity.org