

RANK

72 / 75

2019 CITY CLEAN ENERGY SCORECARD

# Birmingham

Recent actions have helped Birmingham earn points for local government operations; the city completed its project to convert streetlights to LEDs in 2019 and has conducted retrofits of municipal buildings over the last several years. However Birmingham has few other clean energy policies, so it has substantial room to improve across the board. To jump-start its efforts, the city can pursue foundational clean energy policies like developing community-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction, energy-savings, and renewable energy goals; adopting a more stringent building energy code; and creating a sustainable transportation plan to reduce vehicle miles traveled citywide. These could serve as stepping stones to a clean energy future for Birmingham.

OVERALL SCORE

11 / 100



## LOCAL GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

1.5

3.5

9



## COMMUNITY-WIDE INITIATIVES

0.5

4.5

16



## BUILDINGS POLICIES

5

9

30



## ENERGY AND WATER UTILITIES

1

5.5

15



## TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

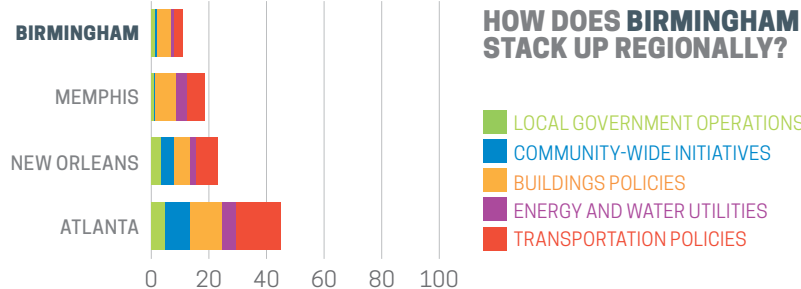
3

8.5

30

MEDIAN SCORE

MAXIMUM POINTS POSSIBLE



## LOCAL GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS (1.5 OF 9 POINTS)

Birmingham has performed audits and retrofits on 120 municipal buildings through energy performance contracting. The city has converted all streetlights to LEDs. Birmingham has few other initiatives to reduce energy use and GHG emissions from local government operations. Birmingham can increase its efforts by establishing climate and energy goals and reducing energy use in new and existing buildings.

## COMMUNITY-WIDE INITIATIVES (0.5 OF 16 POINTS)

Birmingham's Zoning Ordinance allows for conservation subdivisions that encourage the protection of land alongside residential developments. Otherwise, the city has few community-wide initiatives aimed at reducing GHGs. To inspire future clean energy efforts, the city can set GHG reduction, energy-savings, and renewable energy goals. It can take steps to achieve these goals by involving marginalized communities in planning and implementing initiatives, supporting clean, efficient distributed energy systems, and taking greater steps to mitigate the urban heat island effect.

## BUILDINGS POLICIES (5 OF 30 POINTS)

Alabama allows jurisdictions to adopt codes more stringent than those mandated by the state. Birmingham enforces the Alabama Residential Energy Code, which references the 2015 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC), and the Alabama Commercial Energy Code, which references ASHRAE 90.1-2013. Birmingham's work to train minority business enterprise contracting partners helps grow an equitable clean energy workforce. Birmingham can do more to encourage energy efficiency and renewable energy in buildings by updating building energy codes and establishing clean energy requirements.

## ENERGY AND WATER UTILITIES (1 OF 15 POINTS)

Through the Smart Cities Readiness Challenge, the city works with Alabama Power to promote energy efficiency. Compared to other utilities, Alabama Power and Alagasco show low savings for both electric and natural gas efficiency programs. Neither utility offers comprehensive programs for low-income or multifamily households. Based on available data, we did not find that Birmingham encouraged Alabama Power to increase its utility-scale or distributed electricity generation from renewable sources; the utility does not offer incentives for the construction of new distributed solar or wind systems. Birmingham could also improve the energy efficiency of water services.

## TRANSPORTATION POLICIES (3 OF 30 POINTS)

Birmingham has form-based zoning codes for some districts, has reduced minimum parking requirements to one space in some neighborhoods, and has a complete streets policy. Otherwise the city has few sustainable transportation initiatives. To improve its standing in the next *Scorecard*, the city could develop a standalone sustainable transportation plan, encourage energy-efficient modes of transportation, and incentivize efficient transportation options for low-income households.