St. Louis performed best in buildings policies and community-wide initiatives. Policy developments over the last two years helped the city’s score in both categories. In 2018, the city took steps to improve the energy efficiency of buildings by adopting the 2018 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC). Additionally, recent actions such as piloting a community solar project and adopting a 100% renewable energy mandate through Resolution 124 contributed to the city’s performance in community-wide initiatives. St. Louis can improve across several policy areas to advance its rank in the next edition, most notably local government operations and transportation policies.

St. Louis set a renewable electricity goal for local government operations. The city sets municipal green building requirements and benchmarks energy use of select buildings. Otherwise, it has few initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in local government operations. To jump-start its efforts, St. Louis can establish energy and GHG emissions reduction goals for local government operations.

St. Louis’s GHG emissions reduction goal and renewable energy goal provide the vision for the city’s clean energy efforts. The city does not have a community-wide energy-savings goal. ACEEE does not currently project that the city will achieve its goal to reduce community-wide GHG emissions 25% by 2020. The city administers a community solar pilot project, but it has yet to support the installation of other efficient distributed energy systems such as combined heat and power (CHP) and district energy. The city has not adopted a goal aimed at mitigating the urban heat island effect.

St. Louis requires commercial and residential buildings comply with the 2018 IECC with local amendments. The city promotes clean energy investments in existing buildings through several incentives and financing programs, like the Green HELP program and property-assessed clean energy (PACE) financing. The Building Energy Awareness ordinance requires commercial buildings greater than 50,000 square feet to benchmark energy and water usage. The city could further encourage energy efficiency by passing policies requiring energy actions and running or partnering on programs to develop a clean energy workforce.

Compared to other utilities, Ameren UE and Spire Missouri show low savings for both electric and natural gas efficiency programs. Both utilities offer comprehensive programs for low-income and multifamily households. Through the PACE St. Louis, the city works closely with its utilities to promote energy efficiency. Ameren UE does not offer incentives for the construction of new distributed solar or wind systems. St. Louis could also improve the energy efficiency of water services.

St. Louis’s Sustainability Plan includes provisions to improve the energy efficiency of the city’s transportation sector. However, St. Louis has adopted neither vehicle miles traveled (VMT) nor GHG emission reduction goals for the transportation sector. The city also has not adopted mode shift targets. St. Louis encourages location efficiency through a form-based overlay district. The city can bolster its location-efficient policies by abolishing minimum parking requirements citywide and offering a greater number of incentives for compact and mixed-use development. Relative to other city systems, St. Louis’s transit system is underfunded and moderately accessible.