Bakersfield

Bakersfield had its best performances in the buildings policies and energy and water utilities categories, mostly due to the efforts of the state and the utilities serving the city. California’s energy code stringency and state benchmarking requirement contributed to the city’s score in buildings policies. Likewise, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) and Southern California Gas’s (SoCal Gas) efficiency programs influenced Bakersfield’s score. The city can improve across all policy areas to advance its rank in the next edition of the Scorecard, most notably in local government operations, community-wide initiatives, and transportation policies.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS (1 OF 10 POINTS)
In partnership with PG&E, Bakersfield has converted all streetlights to LEDs. Otherwise, the city has few initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in local government operations. It can ramp up its efforts by establishing climate change mitigation, energy reduction, and renewable energy goals. The city also can integrate clean energy into its construction and procurement processes by setting efficiency requirements for the municipal fleet and installing renewable energy systems in city buildings. Bakersfield can address energy use in existing buildings by benchmarking building energy use, identifying energy efficiency opportunities, and conducting energy retrofits.

COMMUNITY-WIDE INITIATIVES (0 OF 15 POINTS)
Bakersfield has pursued few community-wide initiatives. To inspire future clean energy efforts, the city can adopt citywide climate and energy goals, take an equity-driven approach to clean energy planning, and adopt a formal policy, rule, or agreement that supports the creation of clean, distributed energy systems within the community.

BUILDINGS POLICIES (11 OF 30 POINTS)
Commercial and residential building owners in Bakersfield must comply with CalGreen, and with solar- and electric vehicle-readiness requirements. California’s Assembly Bill 802 requires large commercial and multifamily buildings to benchmark their energy use annually. Bakersfield can do more to reduce GHG emissions in its buildings by adopting energy efficiency policies for existing buildings (such as retrocommissioning requirements) and developing an equitable clean energy workforce.

ENERGY AND WATER UTILITIES (8.5 OF 15 POINTS)
Compared to other utilities, PG&E shows moderate savings as a percentage of sales for electric efficiency programs and SoCalGas reports high savings as a percentage of sales for natural gas efficiency programs. PG&E and SoCalGas jointly offer an energy efficiency program for qualified low-income customers. Both utilities provide multifamily energy efficiency programs. Multiple efforts aim to increase energy and water efficiency in water services.

TRANSPORTATION POLICIES (3 OF 30 POINTS)
Bakersfield’s zoning codes include overlays and mixed-use zones as options for several areas in the city. Bakersfield has not adopted a stand-alone sustainable transportation plan, but the city is a contributor to Kern County’s sustainable transportation plan. The city does not have goals to reduce vehicle miles traveled/ GHG emissions from transportation. Adopting and tracking progress toward these goals would help lay the groundwork for transportation action. Relative to other city systems, Bakersfield’s transit system is underfunded and can improve in accessibility; ensuring continued financial support for service and operations will be crucial in a post-COVID world. Bakersfield can further promote sustainable transportation within the city by subsidizing efficient transportation options for low-income residents.