Oakland

With its performance, Oakland broke into the top 10 for the first time. The city had its best achievements in the energy and water utilities categories, partly due to its membership in East Bay Community Energy, as well as strong efficiency programs and low-income and multifamily offerings from Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E). Oakland also performed well for transportation policies, where it was among the top-10 cities in the category. To retain its top-10 ranking, Oakland will need to maintain its momentum and make additional progress across the policy areas, especially in the buildings sector.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS (7 OF 10 POINTS)

Oakland has greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction and renewable energy goals for local government operations. Based on past years of emissions data, ACEEE projects the city will achieve its near-term local government operations climate mitigation goal to reduce GHG emissions 36% below 2005 levels by 2020. Oakland benchmarks the energy use of all municipal buildings, analyzes energy consumption to identify efficiency opportunities, and conducts retrofits to meet the priority actions listed in the city’s Energy and Climate Action Plan. Oakland also integrates clean energy into its procurement and construction strategies; the city installs renewable energy systems on municipal buildings, converts streetlights to LEDs, and requires the purchase of high-efficiency or zero-emission vehicles.

COMMUNITY-WIDE INITIATIVES (9.5 OF 15 POINTS)

Oakland’s climate change mitigation, energy reduction, and renewable energy goals set the vision for a clean energy future. Based on past years of emissions data, ACEEE projects the city will not achieve its near-term, community-wide climate change mitigation goal of 36% below 2005 levels by 2020. To advance equity-driven planning and implementation, the city solicited feedback from marginalized communities to inform the Energy and Climate Action Plan. The city’s EcoBlock project supports creation of a microgrid that integrates emissions-reducing technologies.

BUILDINGS POLICIES (16 OF 30 POINTS)

Oakland enforces the Oakland Green Building Ordinance, which is based on the CalGreen state code with strengthening amendments. New residential and commercial buildings must adhere to solar- and electric vehicle-readiness requirements. California’s Assembly Bill 802 requires large commercial and multifamily buildings to benchmark their energy use annually. Oakland also offers incentives to spur clean energy investment in buildings. Oakland can do more to reduce GHG emissions from its building sector by requiring additional energy efficiency policies for existing buildings such as audits, retrofits, or building performance standards.

ENERGY AND WATER UTILITIES (11.5 OF 15 POINTS)

Compared to other utilities, PG&E shows moderate savings as a percentage of sales for both electric and natural gas efficiency programs. Oakland works with the utility through a Local Government Partnership. PG&E offers the Energy Savings Assistance Program for low-income customers and energy efficiency programs for multifamily properties. The city supports utility-scale renewable energy generation in numerous ways, including serving as a founding member of East Bay Community Energy, a local government Community Choice Aggregation. Multiple efforts aim to increase the energy and water efficiency of water services and wastewater treatment plants.

TRANSPORTATION POLICIES (19.5 OF 30 POINTS)

While the Oakland Department of Transportation outlines strategies to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and create an efficient transportation system, Oakland has not yet adopted quantitative goals to reduce VMT/GHG emissions from transportation. Oakland’s CURB Report includes mode share targets. To accelerate progress towards these targets, the city can adopt a more comprehensive complete streets policy. Relative to other city systems, Oakland’s transit system is well funded and accessible. Its inclusionary development policy encourages mixed-use and transit-oriented development for low-income households by offering density bonuses for low- and moderate-income units. The city’s bikeshare program also offers reduced ride fares to income-eligible customers.