



Takoma Park City Council Meeting – June 7, 2021 Special Meeting

Presentation

Montgomery County Proposed Building Energy Performance Standards (Bill 16-21)

Recommended Council Action

Receive presentation, discuss proposed law's impacts on Takoma Park, provide written comments to Montgomery County

Context with Key Issues

A major change to Montgomery County's existing building energy benchmarking law has been introduced to the County Council. The amendment is the Building Energy Performance Standard (BEPS) legislation, and could apply to 26 buildings in Takoma Park. Building performance standards are laws that require existing buildings to meet energy performance targets. BEPS would offer a way to meaningfully reduce greenhouse gas emissions while lowering operating costs and creating local jobs. The City is already subject to the Montgomery County Building Benchmarking law, and would be automatically opted-in to the BEPS law.

The County's proposed ordinance applies energy use intensity standards to all County-owned, commercial, and residential buildings 25,000 square feet and larger. The ordinance would apply to 26 buildings in Takoma Park, including 16 multifamily buildings, 2 churches, schools, and several office buildings. BEPS would cover 2.8 million square feet of building space in Takoma Park, a significant increase from the 750,000 square feet from just 7 buildings currently covered by the existing benchmarking law. The Takoma Park Sustainability Manager, Economic Development Manager, and the Housing Development Manager will be working with both Montgomery County officials and impacted building owners in the City to ensure there is ample support should BEPS be adopted by Montgomery County Council.

In the 2020 Climate Emergency Response Framework Resolution, the City Council identified establishing minimum energy efficiency standards or scores for all feasible buildings within the City as a priority strategy to help meet the net-zero greenhouse gas emissions goal by 2035. The City Council specified a goal to establish a program within the next decade, and to bring the least efficient buildings up to an average, using national established tools. The Framework further specifies which building types should be covered, including multifamily buildings with 20 units or more; non-residential buildings of 10,000 square feet or more, with recommendations for smaller non-residential buildings; and single-family homes and rental units.

Given the amount of technical expertise, outreach, staff time, and financial assistance required to implement a building energy performance standard, it is in the City's best interest to support Montgomery County administering a BEPS law. As Montgomery County establishes this new model for BEPS with all of the necessary support systems, Takoma Park can advocate for additional classes of buildings to be added in future amendments.

Council Priority

Environmentally Sustainable Community

Goal: Climate Change Mitigation: Work towards net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2035.
Strategies:

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- Prioritize and accelerate policies and programs that implement the 2020 Climate Emergency Response Framework strategies for buildings, transportation, renewable energy, and a fossil fuel-free community.
- Coordinate and advocate for climate change mitigation resiliency and sustainability with county, state, region and federal governments.
- Integrate City climate goals and strategies with other City policies and programs such as urban forest, housing, economic development, and Vision Zero transportation goals.

Environmental Considerations

Greenhouse gas emissions, sustainability, energy efficiency

Fiscal Considerations

In recognition of the financial difficulty that some building owners may face in meeting the performance standard, the County has committed to providing technical assistance, favorable financing tools and, where appropriate, financial incentives, to help building owners comply with BEPS. Additionally, if the legislation is adopted by the County Council, Montgomery County and neighboring Washington, DC would have an opportunity to collaborate on a regional level to support building owners and the contractors that serve them through financing programs, technical assistance, and facilitating the exchange of best practices among owners, contractors, utilities, and other stakeholders.

Racial Equity Considerations

The County intends to develop BEPS that align with goals for climate and racial/social equity, balances flexibility with immediate action, provides certainty and transparency for building owners and tenants, and spurs jobs and economic growth.

Attachments and Links

- Background information on BEPS
- Takoma Park Covered Buildings
- Montgomery County Presentation on BEPS