



Urban Agenda Platform

The global platform for sharing progress, action and knowledge on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to achieve sustainable urban development.

I. Solving Climate Change and Creating Green Spaces: Energize Denver - Engery Benchmarking

Award Scheme

Guangzhou Award

Sustainable Development Goals

Goal 11 - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Summary

Energize Denver aims to reduce the energy consumption of large buildings by 10 percent by 2020 and 30 percent by 2030. The Energize Denver benchmarking ordinance requires owners of buildings over 25,000 square feet to annually benchmark and report their energy performance.

Background and Objective

The Green Building Policy will result in reduced urban heat island, new green spaces, water and storm water management and greenhouse gas emission reductions. ORIGINS The Green Roof Ordinance passed by the voters had great benefits for Denver, but was problematic for a number of reasons. These reasons include that the ordinance was copied by voters from Toronto and conflicted with Denver's municipal code in many ways. Also, most existing buildings would be exempt because they can't support the weight of a vegetated roof. And, new single story retail and industrial buildings had the heaviest requirements and much needed new grocery stores and warehouses might not be built. The Green Roofs Review Task Force's mission was to recommend modifications, clarifications, and improvements to the Green Roof Ordinance through a collaborative, consensus-based process that honored the vote and the benefits that the ordinance would have achieved. The new Green Building Policy recommended by the task force will be passed by City Council in October or November of 2018. The Green Roofs Review Task Force included green roof proponents, the real estate sector who were green roof opponents, additional experts, two City Council members, and some city staff. The partnership that formed in the task force between the proponents and opponents in finding a solution that both could agree was a better pathway forward for Denver was the true innovation. Existing city staff diverted time from other projects to staff the task force and city council process to review the Green Roofs Ordinance and pass the new Green Building Policy. The City will bring on 6 new staff in January of 2019 to assist in the implementation of the new Green Building Policy.

Outcomes and Impacts

The proposed Green Building Policy will require that new buildings must include a cool roof plus one of eight compliance options: A green roof or green space anywhere on the site. A financial contribution for off-site green space. A combination of green space and solar panels. A combination of green space and energy efficiency measures. A solar array covering 70 percent of the roof. Energy efficiency measures so that the building is 12 percent more efficient than current energy code. LEED Gold or equivalent certification. Enterprise Green Communities Certification. The proposed Green Building Policy recommends that owners of existing buildings will have to install a cool roof plus select one of five compliance options at the time of replacing their roof: 1. A small green roof or green space anywhere on the site. 2. An on-site solar array. 3. LEED Silver or equivalent certification. 4. A financial contribution for off-site green space. 5. Enrollment in a flexible Energy Program to achieve emission reductions similar to those achieved by the on-site solar option. The program will include options to buy community solar or to improve building energy efficiency in any way that makes the most sense for that building. The scale of changes is local, but the policy may provide a model for other cities. Consensus of the task force is the most critical metric of success for this process since the task force included diverse stakeholders. The task force had 1 month of public comment on their work, multiple in person input sessions, and a survey of residents reviewing and informing their work. Passage of the new Green Building Policy in October or November of 2018 will be the other key metric. A great facilitator and great stakeholder engagement were critical tools in our task force's success. Denver's new Green Building Policy will truly position us as a leader in green spaces and climate change. The urban innovation and new green spaces created through the policy will make our city an ever more attractive place to live, work, and play.

Innovative Initiative

Denver's new Green Building Policy is revolutionary in both its development process and its content. Stakeholders on the Green Roofs Review Task Force together developed the Green Building Policy that the City will now implement. It is unusual for a City to give its stakeholders that sort of authority. In terms of content, the Green Building Policy is not something that any other City has ever done. The Green Roofs Review Task Force process



Urban Agenda Platform

The global platform for sharing progress, action and knowledge on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to achieve sustainable urban development.

was modelled on other successful policy processes in Denver, such as the Energize Denver Task Force. But the Green Roofs Review Task Force achieved an even higher level of agreement among the members – with the lead proponent and lead opponents of the ballot initiative writing a joint op-ed supporting the task force recommendations at the conclusion of their work. The Green Building Policy that resulted from the task force's work draws ideas from best practices in other jurisdictions, but provides more flexibility and options for achieving the desired benefits. The green building policy innovation is in the governance process and in the policy. The process enabled a policy that improves upon a past initiative through compromise that considered the concerns of all stakeholders while improving the environmental benefits. The new Green Building Policy faces resistance from those who say the City should not change a voter passed initiative as well as from those who say the City Council should get rid of the policy entirely. The task force process gracefully overcomes both of those barriers by bringing critical voices from each of those perspectives together to one consensus recommendation.

Conclusion

LEARNING ASPECTS Denver is always eager to share lessons learned with other cities and to learn more best practices from them. We do that today primarily through participation in the City Energy Project and the Urban Sustainability Directors Network. RELEVANCE TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable Target 6: Improve air quality and manage municipal and other wastes Target 7: Universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible green and public spaces, in particular of women, children older persons and persons with disabilities Target 9: Improving resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters and implement holistic disaster risk management Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts