



# City of Delray Beach

## M E M O R A N D U M

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**TO:** City Commission

**FROM:** Green Implementation Advancement Board

**DATE:** November 26, 2024

**SUBJECT:** Recommendations for Green Building Ordinance Reevaluation and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Goals

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The Green Implementation Advancement Board (GIAB) respectfully submits the following recommendations for your consideration regarding the reevaluation of the City's Green Building Ordinance (GBO). These recommendations are aimed at supporting Delray Beach's ambitious Climate Action Plan and our goals of reducing Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions by 50% by 2030 and 100% by 2050.

As reevaluation of the Green Building Ordinance (GBO) is considered, we encourage a strong focus on electrical energy usage, energy efficiency, renewable energy, insulation and weatherization. These factors are integral to reducing energy consumption and aligning building performance with our GHG reduction targets.

The Florida Building Code already includes energy modeling, which calculates expected energy performance for new buildings. However, to move forward effectively, we need to expand this effort with additional strategies, including data collection and benchmarking.

Benchmarking and the Home Energy Rating System (HERS) Rating are critical tools in assessing and comparing energy performance in both new and existing buildings. These widely accepted industry standards provide vital data that will guide decision-making and performance improvements:

**Benchmarking:** This process compares a building's energy usage to similar structures. We recommend working toward a requirement for all existing buildings (residential and commercial) to benchmark their energy usage via the EPA ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager and report results to the City of Delray Beach.

**HERS Rating:** For new residential construction (both single-family and multi-family), we recommend requiring a HERS Rating. This rating is already approved by the state of Florida as an alternative compliance path to the ERI Score for Florida Energy Code requirements. It offers valuable insights into a building's energy performance, informing measures to optimize efficiency and reduce emissions.

These tools can also fill an important gap in building performance data currently not addressed under the GBO, which only covers new buildings. Benchmarking and HERS ratings are effective in addressing

energy usage and thus GHG emissions across the entire building stock of the City, including both new and existing structures.

Addressing the energy performance of our existing building stock is particularly urgent, given that approximately 75% of the buildings that will be in operation by 2050 are already built. These structures are far from achieving net-zero emissions. Therefore, it is critical to begin addressing the performance of these existing buildings right away to meet our 2030 and 2050 reduction targets.

To set an example for the community, we recommend that the City of Delray Beach begin benchmarking energy usage for its own buildings. This leadership will encourage the private sector to follow suit, promoting transparency and accountability in our shared mission to reduce emissions.

We recommend that public outreach on these initiatives be prioritized by the City, including the Office of Sustainability and Resilience. Educating property owners, developers, and residents regarding the importance of energy benchmarking, HERS ratings, and green building practices will be key to obtaining community buy-in for revisions to the green building ordinance, and other GHG reduction strategies. Outreach should emphasize the economic benefits, as using less electricity not only lowers GHG emissions but also can result in significant cost savings for property owners. This dual benefit can help build momentum and support for the necessary changes.

There is an undeniable link between green buildings, GHG reduction, and the City's Climate Action Plan. LEED, FGBC, NGBS, and Green Globes certifications – all of which are referenced in the GBO – require performance modeling that supports informed decision-making in the design and operation of buildings. These models are essential for reducing the GHG emissions that arise from building operations.

The GIAB strongly believes these recommendations, with an emphasis on benchmarking and HERS Ratings, will provide the necessary framework to reduce GHG emissions from buildings in Delray Beach. This approach will position us to meet the ambitious goals being developed in the Climate Action Plan. We look forward to working with the City Commission and Sustainability Office to make these recommendations a reality.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

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Evan Orellana  
Chair, Green Implementation Advancement Board

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Date