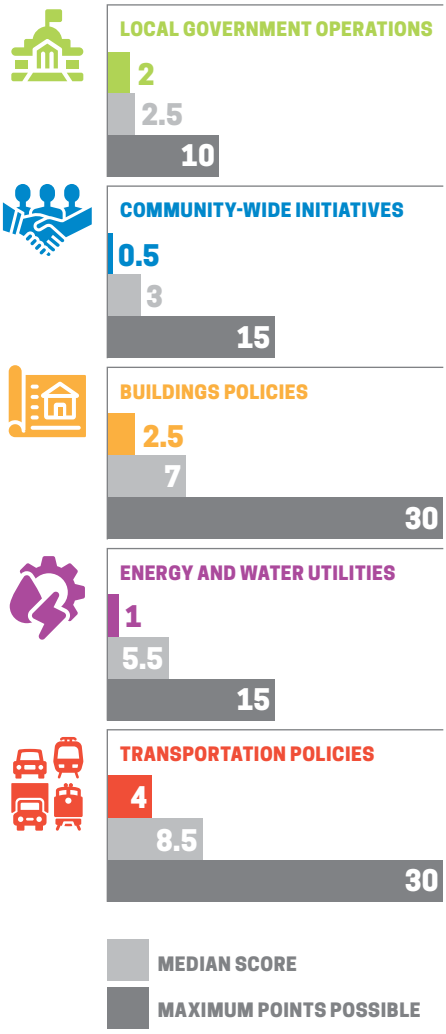
RANK

88 /100

OVERALL SCORE

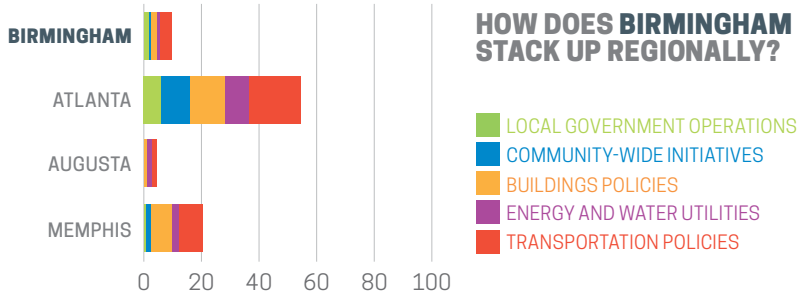
10 /100



2020 CITY CLEAN ENERGY SCORECARD

Birmingham

While Birmingham had a couple of achievements, the city has few clean energy polices and substantial room for improvement across all categories. The city can pursue foundational clean energy policies like establishing climate and energy goals for the community and local government. It can also adopt a more stringent building code, work to make existing buildings more energy efficient, and create a sustainable transportation plan to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) citywide. These could serve as stepping-stones to a clean energy future.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS (2 OF 10 POINTS)

Birmingham has converted all streetlights to LEDs and has conducted audits and retrofits in 120 municipal buildings. The city also has inclusive procurement and contracting strategies that apply to energy projects. To ramp up its efforts, Birmingham can establish climate, energy efficiency, and renewable energy goals for local government operations. It can also benchmark building energy use, set fleet efficiency requirements, and install onsite renewable energy systems.

COMMUNITY-WIDE INITIATIVES (0.5 OF 15 POINTS)

The city helps reduce urban heat islands by promoting the installation of low-impact development in subdivisions but has pursued few other community-wide initiatives. To inspire future clean energy efforts, Birmingham 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 (2.5 OF 30 POINTS)

Birmingham requires residential buildings to comply with the 2015 Alabama Residential Energy Code, which references the 2015 International Energy Conservation Code; and commercial buildings to comply with the 2015 Alabama Commercial Energy Code, which references ASHRAE 90.1-2013. Due to zoning code amendments, Birmingham allows solar energy use in all zones. Birmingham can do more to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in its buildings sector by adopting energy efficiency policies for existing buildings (such as benchmarking requirements), offering incentives, and further developing an equitable clean energy workforce.

ENERGY AND WATER UTILITIES (1 OF 15 POINTS)

Compared to other utilities, Alabama Power shows low savings as a percentage of sales for electric efficiency programs. Alagasco does not report spending or savings on natural gas efficiency programs. While neither utility offers low-income or multifamily energy efficiency programs, the City of Birmingham has committed to fund residential weatherization. Birmingham can advocate for better data access, encourage efforts to decarbonize the electric grid, and improve the energy and water efficiency of its water services.

TRANSPORTATION POLICIES (4 OF 30 POINTS)

Birmingham adopted a form-based zoning code for the Downtown and Triangle zones; however, it has not adopted a sustainable transportation plan, goals to reduce VMT/GHG emissions from transportation, or mode shift targets. Adopting and tracking progress toward these goals would help lay the groundwork for transportation action. The city can improve the accessibility of and direct investment towards its transit system; ensuring continued financial support for service and operations will be crucial in a post-COVID world. Birmingham can further promote sustainable transportation within the city by offering incentives for the purchase of electric vehicles and the installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

ACEEE
American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy