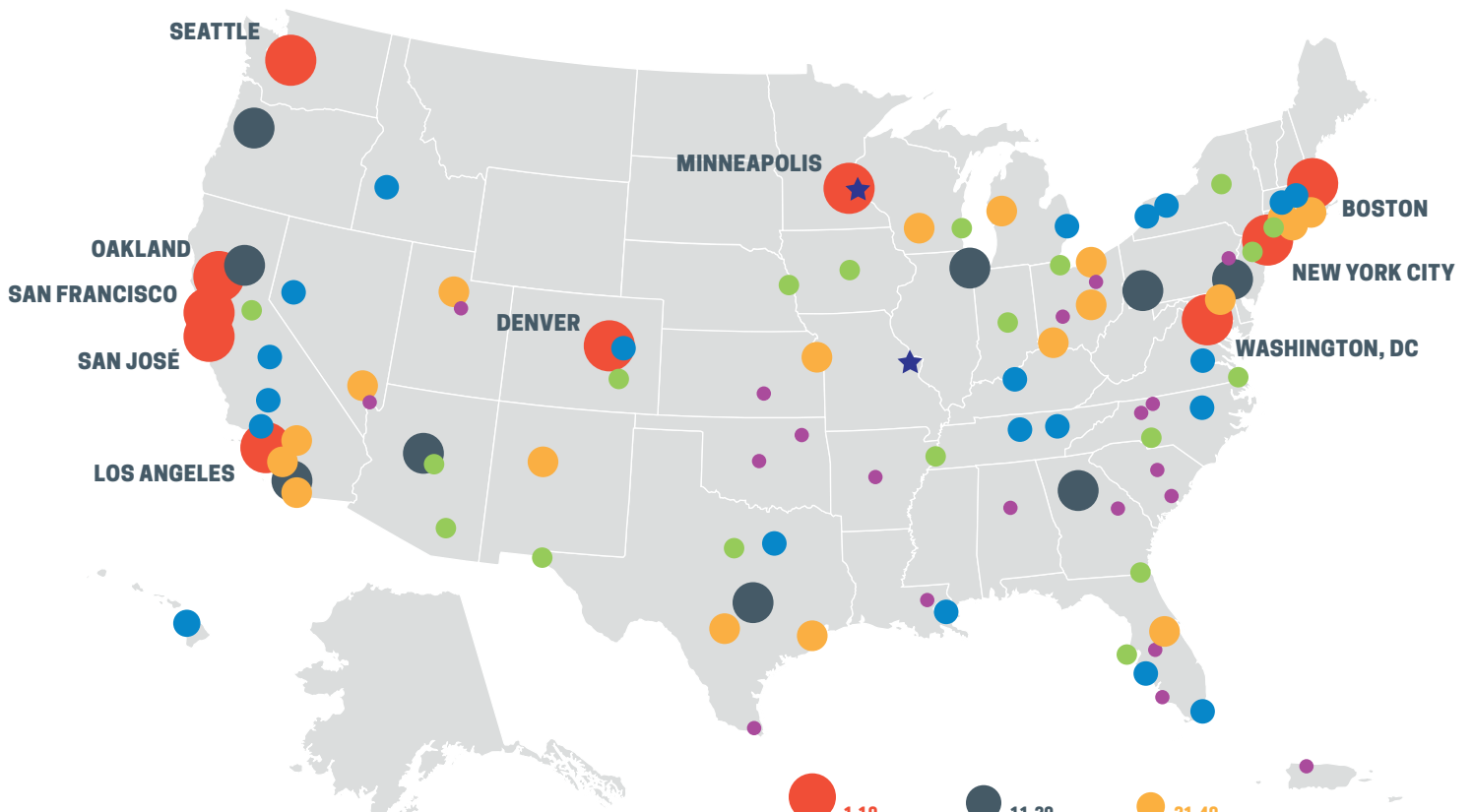# United States

The *2020 City Efficiency Scorecard* captures examples of local leadership on climate action from across the country. New York City is leading the way with outstanding clean energy policies. Others at the top—Boston, Seattle, Minneapolis, and San Francisco—continue to innovate. The leading cities face competition from several others that have redoubled their efforts, like San José and Oakland which both broke into the top 10 for the first time. We also identified St. Paul and St. Louis as the most improved cities this year. St. Paul was the most-improved city in the *2020 City Scorecard*, thanks to improvements made across the board; St. Louis was second-most-improved city, primarily due to the adoption of its Building Energy Performance Standard bill.

Between April 2019 and May 2020, the cities we assessed took more than 165 actions—new initiatives or expansions of past ones—to advance their clean energy agendas. However, a wide gap remains between the leading and lagging cities. If municipalities are to scale up efforts to broadly reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, more cities throughout the rankings will need comprehensive policy accomplishments. All cities can do more to push for innovative buildings policies, tackle transportation emissions, and track progress to prioritize investments as they continue to build prosperous low-carbon communities.

2020 City Rankings

★ **Most Improved Cities:**
St. Paul
St. Louis

● 1-10
1. New York, NY
2. Boston, MA
2. Seattle, WA
4. Minneapolis, MN
4. San Francisco, CA
6. Washington, DC
7. Denver, CO
8. Los Angeles, CA
9. San José, CA
10. Oakland, CA

● 11-20
11. Portland, OR
12. Austin, TX
13. Chicago, IL
14. Atlanta, GA
15. Philadelphia, PA
16. St. Paul, MN
17. Sacramento, CA
18. San Diego, CA
19. Phoenix, AZ
19. Pittsburgh, PA

● 21-40
21. Orlando, FL
22. Chula Vista, CA
23. Hartford, CT
23. Providence, RI
25. Kansas City, MO
26. Long Beach, CA
27. Salt Lake City, UT
28. St. Louis, MO
29. Cleveland, OH
29. Columbus, OH
31. San Antonio, TX
32. Baltimore, MD
33. Grand Rapids, MI
34. Houston, TX
34. Riverside, CA
36. Cincinnati, OH
36. Las Vegas, NV
36. Milwaukee, WI
36. New Haven, CT
40. Albuquerque, NM

● 41-60
41. Honolulu, HI
42. Boise, ID
43. Aurora, CO
43. Buffalo, NY
43. Richmond, VA
43. Rochester, NY
43. Springfield, MA
48. Dallas, TX
48. Louisville, KY
50. Worcester, MA
51. Knoxville, TN
51. Miami, FL
51. New Orleans, LA
51. St. Petersburg, FL
55. Detroit, MI
55. Oxnard, CA
55. Raleigh, NC
58. Nashville, TN
58. Reno, NV
60. Bakersfield, CA
60. Fresno, CA

● 61-80
62. Des Moines, IA
62. Indianapolis, IN
64. Madison, WI
65. Charlotte, NC
66. Fort Worth, TX
66. Stockton, CA
68. Bridgeport, CT
68. Tucson, AZ
70. Memphis, TN
70. Syracuse, NY
72. Colorado Springs, CO
72. Virginia Beach, VA
74. Jacksonville, FL
75. Tampa, FL
76. Mesa, AZ
76. Newark, NJ
78. Omaha, NE
79. Toledo, OH
80. El Paso, TX

● 81-100
81. Dayton, OH
82. Lakeland, FL
83. Akron, OH
83. Winston-Salem, NC
85. Tulsa, OK
86. Allentown, PA
86. Henderson, NV
88. Birmingham, AL
89. Charleston, SC
89. Greensboro, NC
91. Columbia, SC
91. Little Rock, AR
93. Cape Coral, FL
93. Provo, UT
95. McAllen, TX
96. San Juan, PR
97. Baton Rouge, LA
97. Oklahoma City, OK
99. Wichita, KS
100. Augusta, GA

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United States

MEDIAN AND MAXIMUM SCORES

LOCAL GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

2.5
10

COMMUNITY-WIDE INITIATIVES

3
15

BUILDINGS POLICIES

7
30

ENERGY AND WATER UTILITIES

5.5
15

TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

8.5
30

▢ MEDIAN SCORE

▢ MAXIMUM POINTS POSSIBLE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS (MEDIAN SCORE: 2.5 OF 10 POINTS)

Austin, Boston, Portland, San Francisco, and Washington, DC performed best for local government operations. All have set policies to increase efficiency in city government, procurement, and asset management. Across all cities in the *Scorecard*, most municipalities did not perform well for their climate change mitigation, energy reduction, and renewable energy goals. Many cities have established them, but most are not overly stringent and progress toward achieving them is uneven. Of the 51 cities with GHG emissions reduction targets for local government operations, we projected 17 to be on track to reach their goals. Cities scored better for their procurement and construction policies and their asset management strategies. For example, more than 40 cities have converted at least 50% of their streetlights to LEDs and more than 50 cities benchmark energy use in at least 75% of large municipal buildings.

COMMUNITY-WIDE INITIATIVES (MEDIAN SCORE: 3 OF 15 POINTS)

Washington, DC, Denver, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Atlanta, and Cleveland were the highest scoring cities for community-wide initiatives. All six have adopted climate and energy goals and are on track to achieve their near-term GHG emissions reduction goal; all but one address equity in their clean energy planning, implementation, and evaluation. Looking across all 100 cities in the *Scorecard*, most have adopted community-wide climate and clean energy goals; 20 showed they were on track to achieve their GHG emissions reduction goal, an improvement since the last *City Scorecard*. However this means the majority of cities with goals are not on track or lack the data to adequately assess their progress. Cities fared well in urban heat island mitigation, with 75 having a goal or policy in place to reduce elevated urban temperatures. Lastly, only 35 cities scored points for equity-driven planning and implementation, with only Minneapolis, Portland, Providence, and Seattle receiving full points. While 16 cities made advances in equitable planning and implementation, cities can do better.

BUILDINGS POLICIES (MEDIAN SCORE: 7 OF 30 POINTS)

New York, Seattle, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, and Washington, DC were the highest scoring cities for buildings policies. These six show their commitment to reducing building energy use through a combination of stringent energy codes, code compliance, benchmarking ordinances, and other policies requiring clean energy improvements in existing buildings. Across the board, cities have continued their efforts to reduce energy consumption in private buildings, building on progress they made in the *2019 City Scorecard*. Eight have adopted more-stringent building energy codes, and several states have adopted new codes that apply to their cities. Three cities have adopted new energy benchmarking ordinances for commercial and multifamily buildings. And more notably, three cities—New York, St. Louis, and Washington, DC—as well as Washington State adopted building performance standards, demonstrating nationwide momentum for this cutting-edge policy. Nevertheless, more can be done as most cities do not have benchmarking ordinances or other policies requiring clean energy improvements in existing buildings.

ENERGY AND WATER UTILITIES (MEDIAN SCORE: 5.5 OF 15 POINTS)

Boston, Chula Vista, Minneapolis, and San Diego, Los Angeles, and San José were the top scorers for energy and water utilities. The energy efficiency programs of the utilities serving these cities offer high levels of savings, and the utilities and cities are working to increase their supply and use of renewable energy. Across all utilities, we found that few achieved either electric or natural gas savings greater than 2%. Yet more cities have developed formal partnerships with their utilities, and many utilities are continuing to improve and expand their low-income and multifamily programs. While only three cities—Chula Vista, Minneapolis, and San Diego—earned full credit for the renewable energy efforts of their utilities, many cities have ramped up their efforts to encourage the decarbonization of the electric grids. Five cities—Denver, Los Angeles, San Diego, San José, and Seattle—earned full credit for efficiency efforts in drinking water and wastewater services.

TRANSPORTATION POLICIES (MEDIAN SCORE: 8.5 OF 30 POINTS)

San Francisco, Washington, DC, Portland, Seattle, Boston, and Minneapolis were the highest scoring cities for transportation policies. They aim to reduce transportation energy use through myriad efforts including location efficiency strategies, shifts to efficient modes of transportation, and transit investments. All but one of them have made measurable progress towards their vehicle miles traveled (VMT) or GHG emissions reduction goals for the transportation sectors. Across all cities, 74 have sustainable transportation plans, but only 26 have adopted VMT or transportation-related GHG emissions reduction goals. Twenty-one cities had mode shift targets that applied to single-occupancy vehicles, public transit, walking, and biking. While several cities are leading the way in transportation system efficiency, all cities can do more to reduce energy use and emissions in the transportation sector, particularly through policies that impact the transportation system as a whole in addition to vehicle-specific changes.

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