

# BEND HOME ENERGY SCORE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS –

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*As part of the 2019 Bend Community Climate Action Plan to reduce community greenhouse gas emissions, the City of Bend is developing a Home Energy Score Program. Below are frequently asked questions about the program.*

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## ***What is the Home Energy Score Program?***

A Home Energy Score is a rating that assesses a home's energy efficiency. Like a miles-per-gallon rating for a vehicle, a home energy score provides information about how efficiently the home uses energy, which can inform a buyer's purchase decision. The proposed Home Energy Score Program would require that homes listed for sale in Bend obtain a Home Energy Score prior to listing. The homeowner or its realtor must then share the scorecard with prospective buyers looking at the home. The home energy score tool was created by the U.S. Department of Energy and is used across the country.

## ***Why is the City of Bend considering this and what are the benefits?***

Home Energy Score reports provide transparency to homebuyers about the efficiency of a home and how much the home's energy costs (such as heating and cooling costs) will be, compared to other homes on the market. The score allows homeowners to consider energy costs when deciding which home to purchase. The report also provides information about the physical attributes of the home that prospective buyers may not otherwise see, like insulation and heating and cooling systems.

Further, Home Energy Scores can motivate home sellers and buyers to voluntarily invest in energy efficiency upgrades. By providing information about cost-effective upgrades in an understandable format, more homeowners may improve the efficiency of their homes, resulting in reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

## ***Will there be assistance available?***

To the extent that City funds are available, the City may provide a grant to the seller of a covered buildings for the cost of obtaining a home energy score if the seller has been deemed eligible to participate in a low-income assistance program offered by the City or another governmental entity.

## ***How did we get here?***

Creating a Home Energy Score program is part of the [Bend Community Climate Action Plan](#) adopted in 2019. The plan is a roadmap to achieve the City's climate action goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2030 and 70% by 2050. Of all of the actions in the Community Climate Action Plan, the [City's Environment and Climate Committee](#) prioritized the Home Energy Score Program for implementation during the 2021-2023 biennium. In March 2022, the City Council Stewardship Subcommittee confirmed that the City Council supported



developing a Home Energy Score Program this year, and that the program should include a requirement to obtain a home energy score, as opposed to creating a voluntary home energy score program.

### ***How do you get a Home Energy Score and what is the cost?***

A Home Energy Score would be obtained by hiring a licensed Home Energy Assessor who is authorized to do the Home Energy Score assessment. The cost is determined by the market. In other Oregon cities with similar program, they cost between \$150-\$300. Homeowners planning on selling their home pay for the score directly to the licensed home energy assessor performing the service.

### ***Can't I just request utility bills to see the energy use of potential homes?***

A Home Energy Score shows how efficiently a home uses energy, whereas energy bills provide more information about how much energy the previous owner used, which varies dramatically based on behavior. The Home Energy Score takes out the occupant behavior factor, which is much more helpful when comparing homes side by side. Just like purchasing a used car, knowing how much gas the previous owner purchased each week is less helpful than knowing the miles-per-gallon rating of the car.

### ***What is the process to move this program forward?***

The proposed program details are available for review at [bendoregon.gov/city-projects/community-priorities/sustainability/energy/home-energy-score](https://bendoregon.gov/city-projects/community-priorities/sustainability/energy/home-energy-score). The City Council Stewardship Subcommittee is scheduled to discuss the program on July 25, 2022. The Environment and Climate Committee is expected to recommend the program to the Council for adoption in the Fall. Committee meeting agendas and links to view the meetings can be found on the [Environment and Climate Committee](#) webpage.

If the Subcommittee decides to move it forward, the Council anticipates holding a work session before considering adoption of the ordinance, which is expected to occur late fall or early winter. During this time Council will also consider any written and oral public comment they receive as part of the process.

#### **Key Dates**

- **July 14, 11 a.m.** – Environment and Climate Committee meeting discussing program details and enforcement
- **July 25, 11:30 a.m.** – Council Stewardship Subcommittee discussion of the program and feedback from Councilors
- **August 1, 3 p.m.** – Open house and Q&A Session about the proposed program

### ***How can I provide input?***

Members of the public are invited to share their feedback about the program at the online form at [bendoregon.gov/city-projects/community-priorities/sustainability/energy/home-energy-score](https://bendoregon.gov/city-projects/community-priorities/sustainability/energy/home-energy-score).



Staff are available to present information, answer questions and solicit feedback for interested groups. Groups or organizations interested in inviting staff to their meetings can contact Cassie Lacy at [clacy@bendoregon.gov](mailto:clacy@bendoregon.gov)

Additionally, members of the public are invited to listen and share public comments during Environment and Climate Committee meetings. The Environment and Climate Committee is expected to make a decision about whether to recommend the program to the Council in the fall.

Last, members of the public may provide public comment at City Council meetings. The Council expects to hold a work session on the Home Energy Score in the late fall. Watch [www.bendoregon.gov/councilagenda](http://www.bendoregon.gov/councilagenda) for upcoming agendas.

