



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

CINCINNATI
2030
DISTRICT®

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The past year has marked a time of transition for the Cincinnati 2030 District. After the departure of the former District staff in May of 2023, the leadership of Green Umbrella convened a visioning effort to take stock of the Program and think creatively about its future. Some of the themes that emerged from that exercise were as follows:

- Value creation for members is paramount
- Scalability is a priority
- Different target audiences have different needs
- Engaging with policy is an untapped opportunity
- Storytelling is vital

In October of 2023, I joined the 2030 District as its new Director, bringing with me a background in environmental and energy policy and organizational strategy. Since I joined, I have been engaged in a process to build on that visioning session and map a strategy for moving forward. This report is the overview of that strategy.

I am energized by what the 2030 District has already achieved and inspired by the opportunity it has to build on these accomplishments. My vision is for the District to develop into a thriving, region-wide community of building owners and professional service providers, all learning from each other, supporting each other, and creating value through the process of decarbonizing our built environment.

This is a critical time for the 2030 District. With each passing year, as we see new high temperature records set across the country and around the world, there is growing awareness of the effects of climate change and the importance of taking action to mitigate its worst effects. Any strategy for how we do that must address buildings. Well over half our energy use occurs in our buildings. The efficiency of our buildings and the devices we use in them is directly related to the amount of energy we need, and thus the impact our energy use has on the broader world. Every time we do more with less or cleaner energy (or water, or transportation), we take another step toward true sustainability.

That is the mission of the 2030 District - to advance our region down the path toward sustainability. In the process, we will realize not only environmental benefits, but social and economic ones as well. I encourage you to read on and learn more about our emerging strategy for achieving this mission.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Wyatt King', written in a cursive style.

Wyatt King, Director
Cincinnati 2030 District

AN EVOLVING STRATEGY

The Cincinnati 2030 District is evolving. To better meet new challenges and opportunities across our region, we are revising our membership structure, expanding our service territory, differentiating our value offering, shifting our approach to data reporting, elevating the importance of frontline communities, and reassessing how we engage with public policy. Read on for more details about the changes we have planned.

1. Full Integration into Green Umbrella’s Regional Climate Collaborative Model

Last October, Green Umbrella unveiled its new incarnation as a Regional Climate Collaborative (RCC), in which all programs are focused on coordinating collective action to mitigate and adapt to climate change. In many ways, this transition was easy for the 2030 District, as its mission has always been to facilitate efficiency improvements to achieve reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. But there are other ways Green Umbrella’s transition to an RCC impacts the 2030 District.

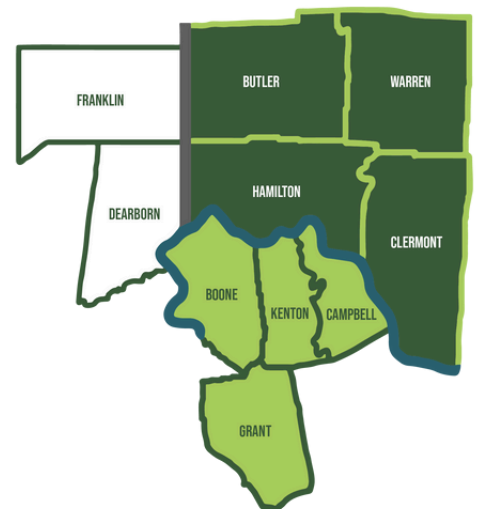
Administratively, the 2030 District’s membership structure is now fully integrated with Green Umbrella’s. Whereas previously an organization could be a member of one entity without being a member of the other, now all members of the 2030 District are also members of Green Umbrella. The process is not automatic in reverse - becoming a Building Member or Professional Partner of the 2030 District still requires an organization to commit to specific performance targets, but any Green Umbrella member able to make those commitments is welcome to join the 2030 District, regardless of their location in Green Umbrella’s ten-county service territory.

Equally significant, the programmatic integration of the 2030 District into Green Umbrella’s framework has meant a shift in our “business model.” We aim to diversify revenue streams by expanding membership and sponsorship opportunities and pursuing an expanded set of grant and fee-for service-opportunities. We plan to focus more on expanding our member network, which should enable us to sustain and broaden our programming to provide greater value for members.



2. Expanding Our Reach

Starting immediately, the Cincinnati 2030 District will open membership eligibility to commercial buildings throughout Green Umbrella’s ten-county service territory. While the 2030 District has long had a few Members located outside downtown Cincinnati, the main focus has been on the urban core. We have found that many organizations located outside of the historical footprint would benefit from the 2030 District’s value proposition. Given our overarching mission to reduce emissions, it is in our interest to serve as many of these organizations as possible.



In addition, we have found that many of the large, downtown buildings do not have a significant need for the 2030 District’s traditional services. Many of these buildings, and the large companies that own or manage them, have considerable in-house facilities management expertise, and/or long-standing relationships with third-party service providers. In addition, they often already have public-facing commitments to reduce emissions. For all these reasons, we believe it is sensible to expand our service territory to recruit enthusiastic participants who are ready for support from a much wider area.

3. Differentiating our Value Offering for Different Audiences

Many small-to-medium-sized businesses, non-profits, schools, and local government entities do not have significant energy management experience and need the practical support that the 2030 District offers, such as benchmarking help, building performance analysis, and connections to professional service providers.



As noted previously, larger organizations, by contrast, often have these bases covered. However, we still believe we can provide a compelling value proposition for them, and we are considering creating a new membership category devoted explicitly to their needs. This new category would focus on helping members by showcasing their decarbonization efforts, leveraging their leadership to inspire and help others in the community, harnessing their team spirit through friendly “resource-reduction competitions” with similar organizations, and engaging their non-engineering employees in decarbonization efforts through programs like energy or water “treasure hunts” and E-bike “try-and-ride” events.

4. Shifting our Reporting Focus

The Cincinnati 2030 District has historically focused primarily on a discrete footprint in downtown Cincinnati. Since the District was first established, a significant effort has been made to recruit as many of the buildings in that footprint as possible, and then to report on the progress of the District as a whole toward the 2030 Network's goals¹. In practice, this effort at aggregate reporting has consistently faced challenges stemming from incomplete data. As a result, it has been difficult to present a clear picture of the District's overall performance.

Going forward, we plan to shift the 2030 District's approach to data reporting. We will no longer attempt to report on performance of the entire District; rather, we will report on the aggregate performance of all the buildings that meet certain data-sharing criteria. For example, we will report on the aggregate performance of all member buildings that have shared at least 12 consecutive months of data, 36 months of data, and 60 months of data. We hope this approach will allow us to fill persistent data gaps and provide useful insights into resource usage trends among District members.

5. Emphasis on Frontline Communities

One of Green Umbrella's core values is Equity & Justice. We uphold this value by working closely with low-income communities and communities of color that have historically been marginalized in our political and economic processes. Frequently, communities are also the most susceptible to the risks posed by climate change. We are working to expand the 2030 District's emphasis on equity and justice. This will include reaching out to organizations in historically marginalized communities that stand to benefit from our core value offering, including houses of worship, multi-family housing developments, community centers, and other public meeting places.



¹ Original goals were: 50% reduction in net energy use, 50% reduction in water consumption, and 50% reduction in transportation-related emissions by 2030.

² The others are Environmental Stewardship, Regional Collaboration, and Community Well-being.

6. Engaging with Policy

Historically, the Cincinnati 2030 District has limited its public policy advocacy out of deference to the diverse views on government regulation held by 2030 District Members. We were not confident that we could develop consensus policy positions that reflected the views of all members.

Well-designed public policy, however, can be an effective way to achieve widespread change in the building sector. We have seen significant reductions in building energy use in cities that have established energy efficiency requirements, offered targeted incentives, or a combination of both. Because of this opportunity for widespread impact, we plan to engage more directly with the policymaking process. The exact contours of this work will vary depending on the issue in question, but may include education of elected officials and building stakeholders, public testimony, and advocacy around specific policy proposals.

The following are possible examples of regulatory issues on which the 2030 District may take a formal position:

- Building Codes
- Benchmarking Ordinances
- Building Performance Standards
- Incentives for EV Infrastructure
- Green Bank
- Utility-Based Programs (e.g. Energy Efficiency Programs, Whole-building Data Sharing, Automated Data Sharing)
- Aggregation Programs (e.g. increasing Commercial Participation)

We realize it is possible that when and if we take a public position on policy, some Members may not agree with those positions. When we do take a position, we pledge to provide a clear rationale as to our motivation. In addition, we will always be open to meeting with any Member or prospective Member to discuss policy matters and, to the greatest extent possible, incorporate constructive feedback in our approach to education and advocacy. We will remain, at all times, cognizant and respectful of our legal requirements and limitations as a non-profit organization.





ENDURING COMMITMENTS AMIDST CHANGE

Despite the changes outlined above, much about our core value proposition at the Cincinnati 2030 District will remain the same as it has always been.

We will continue to help **building owners** to:

- learn how and why to benchmark their energy and water usage;
- discover ways to reduce transportation-related emissions;
- understand how to improve occupant health in their buildings;
- analyze their building performance;
- identify the highest-opportunity interventions;
- develop comprehensive improvement plans for their properties;
- connect with qualified professionals who can help them with implementation; and
- identify and access financial resources to support their building transformations.

We will continue to help **professional service providers** to:

- reach new prospective clients and grow their businesses;
- learn how to help clients take advantage of new financial incentives; and
- remain current with the ever-changing technological landscape.

We will continue to help our **community partners** to:

- engage with owners and service providers in the building sector and
- support the process of building decarbonization in our community.

We will continue to help **all our members** to:

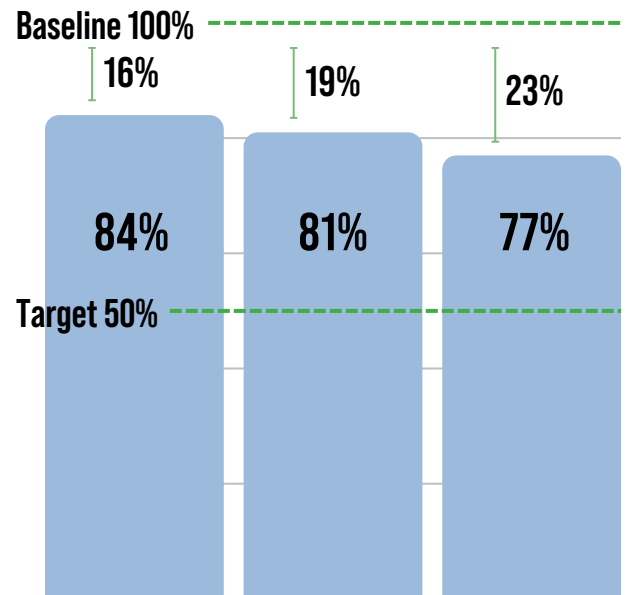
- showcase and celebrate their success stories;
- build a thriving community of practice; and
- capture the economic, social, and environmental value of improving our buildings.

2023 PERFORMANCE REPORT

ENERGY

Average energy use intensity (EUI) reductions for buildings based on length of time they have been engaged in energy benchmarking.

Minimum consecutive months of energy data	12	36	60
Number of buildings	116	97	94
Square footage	5,225,863	4,207,041	4,047,876
EUI reduction from baseline	16%	19%	23%



WATER

Average water use intensity (WUI) reductions for buildings based on length of time they have been engaged in water benchmarking.

Minimum consecutive months of water use data	12	36	60
Number of buildings	10	9	9
Square footage	2,108,108	2,072,859	2,072,859
WUI reduction from baseline	32%	33%	33%

