Green Buildings Task Force

Staying on top of capital improvements is essential to the value and life cycle of all buildings. With the pressures of climate change, there is more interest in strategies that improve energy efficiency. GBTF is here to help local buildings come together, navigate the options, and find resources and financing. Below are recommended steps and introductory resources to reduce your building's carbon footprint.

(1) Learn About Building Energy Systems

Many parts of a building contribute to energy costs and your building's quality (e.g., temperature control). Here are resources to learn about buildings' energy systems and options to improve.

Quick Overview

- Building Walk-Through Guide
  - This list shows a building's many opportunities to improve energy efficiency.
    https://drive.google.com/file/d/12Z96BDV1CumVg3vUed6o2cARmU8qXqNc/view?usp=sharing

Specific Building-Energy-System Parts

- One-Pipe Steam Systems
  - Describes one-pipe steam systems, and six steps for optimizing it.
    https://drive.google.com/file/d/12chE9eLMlhBawH6OuObPaCb45Xj4Ao3b/view

- Air Source Heat Pumps
  - A full guide about heat pumps. Also includes tips on finding an installer.
    https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/guides/heat-pump-buying-guide/
    Video Intro: https://youtu.be/RdzjrVwWz4o

- LED Lighting Retrofits
  - A description of LED lights and their benefits (especially efficiency), as well as solutions to reduce lighting-related electricity bills.
    https://accelerator.nyc/sites/default/files/2022-04/NYCA_TP_LED%20lighting.pdf

- Induction Cooking
  - Explains the dangers of gas stoves, and introduces an alternative: induction technology.
    https://be-exchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/beex_techprimer_inductioncooking_083122.pdf
    Video Demo by Chefs: https://youtu.be/7p6buePWKII

Advanced Reading

- Low-Carbon Multi-Family Retrofit Playbooks
  - (1) Explore and pick a "book" based on your residential building's type/elements, then (2) review for your building's most impactful options. The books come in three formats: a web page, a 2-page PDF, and a "full report."
    https://be-exchange.org/lowcarbonmultifamily-main/

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(2) Survey Your Building

Buildings are complex with interrelated systems, so it is important to get a professional, holistic evaluation that considers the order in which you make upgrades. For example, before you get an engineer to design a new HVAC system, it will cost less in the long term to first improve your insulation (to minimize heat load).

NYC Accelerator Program

NYC Accelerator offers help from experts to customize a plan for free or at low cost.
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-SvCuA3gzHE5GYeF4sM-Cznbm-69W3RL/view
Direct Website: nyc.gov/accelerator

(3) Find Financial Aid

Improving buildings' energy efficiency and quality can be costly, but many organizations want to help, so they offer financing programs and incentives.

Association for Energy Affordability (AEA)

This non-profit finds and lists incentives and programs for improving buildings' energy efficiency. Look for New York options, and easily read eligibility criteria.
https://aea.us.org/aea-programs/

NY State Historic Tax Credit

For qualifying properties, the NY State Historic Tax Credit allows property owners to claim, as a credit on their NY State tax returns, 20% of the cost of qualifying capital improvements.
https://parks.ny.gov/shpo/tax-credit-programs/default.aspx

(4) Stay Updated on the Law

If your building is only motivated by cost, then it pays to learn how your building's carbon emissions can lead to city penalties and fines.

NYC Sustainability Help Center (by CUNY Building Performance Lab)

This is a free public resource to learn and ask questions about NYC's major building sustainability laws. Some laws will penalize buildings with large carbon footprints, so pay special attention to NYC Local Law 97.
https://cunybpltraining.org/sustainability-help-center/

About Us

In 2023, the Green Buildings Task Force will continue to share information, resources, and inspiration on how to make buildings more energy efficient, add solar panels and green roofs, and understand air source heat pumps and other decarbonization technologies and strategies, all by building a peer network of buildings. The Task Force seeks to assemble green-buildings clusters that can create scale in doing various improvements, with the goal of reducing costs through a group purchase. To get involved, please contact us at queensclimateproject@gmail.com.