

# Building Emissions Performance Standard and Urban Forestry

Office of Sustainability & Environment



# Office of Sustainability & Environment (OSE)

**Mission:** Ensure a clean and healthy environment for every resident of Seattle. We **prioritize those currently and historically harmed** by racial, economic and environmental injustice and serve as cross-departmental and community **collaborators, innovators, and drivers of cutting-edge city policy.**





# OSE's core services:

## Climate & Environmental Justice



- Environmental Justice Fund
- Climate Workforce
- Resilience Hubs
- Duwamish Valley Program
- Green New Deal Oversight Board

## GHG Emissions Reductions



- Transportation Electrification
- Low Pollution Neighborhoods
- **BEPS**
- Clean Heat Program
- Municipal Energy Emissions Program

## Food Policy & Programs



- Healthy School Food
- Sustainable Procurement
- Fresh Bucks
- Food Action Plan
- Sweetened Beverage Tax CAB

## Seattle's Trees & Forests



- Canopy Equity Plan
- **Tree Canopy Cover Assessment**
- \$12M USFS Grant
- Urban Forestry Commission
- Trees for Seattle

# Seattle's **NEW** Building Emissions Performance Standard (BEPS) for Existing Buildings

Seattle City Council – Sustainability & Environment Committee

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OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY & ENVIRONMENT

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City of Seattle




# Context



# Both of these are true

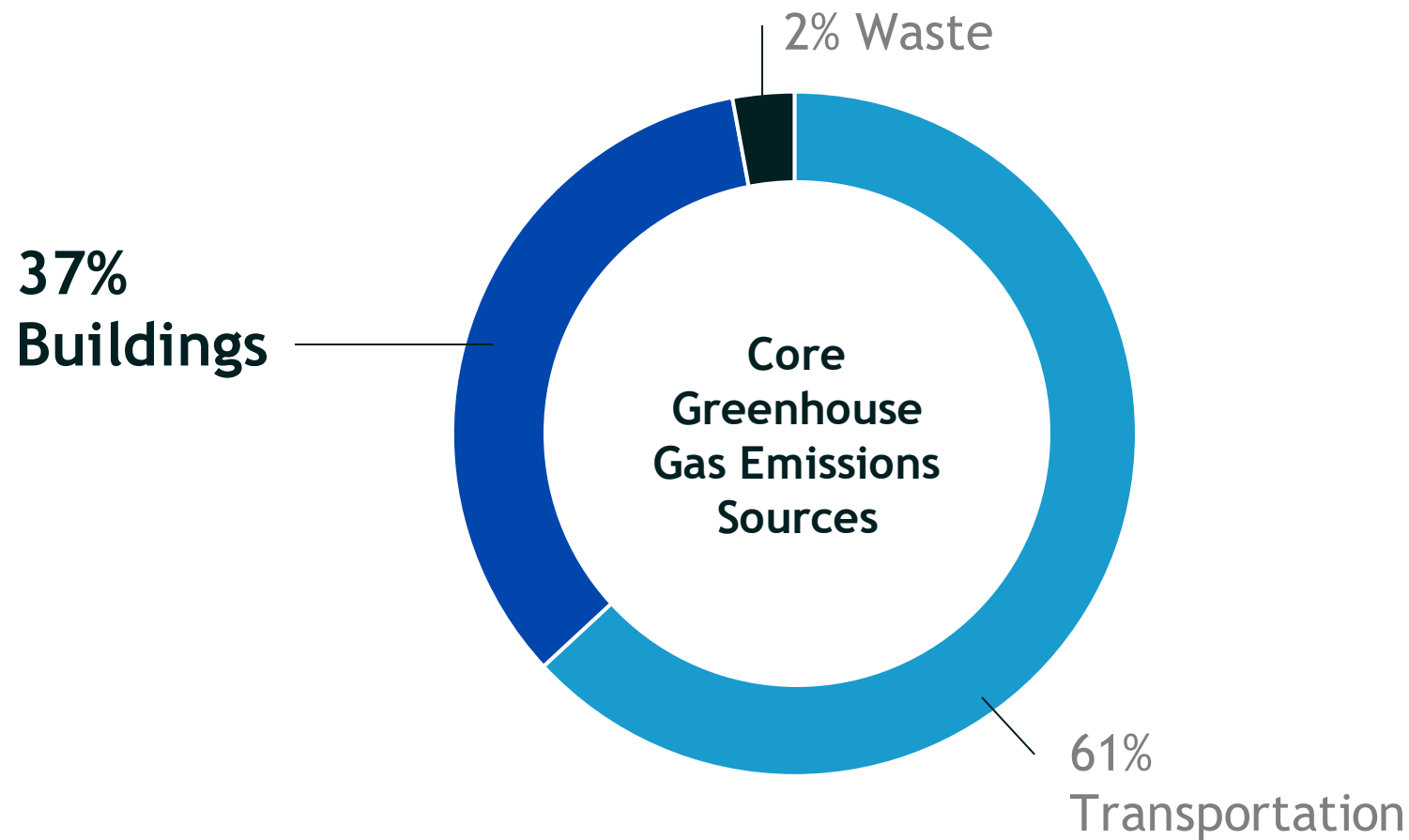


We are in a Climate Crisis



Transforming our buildings will require  
a focused and sustained effort

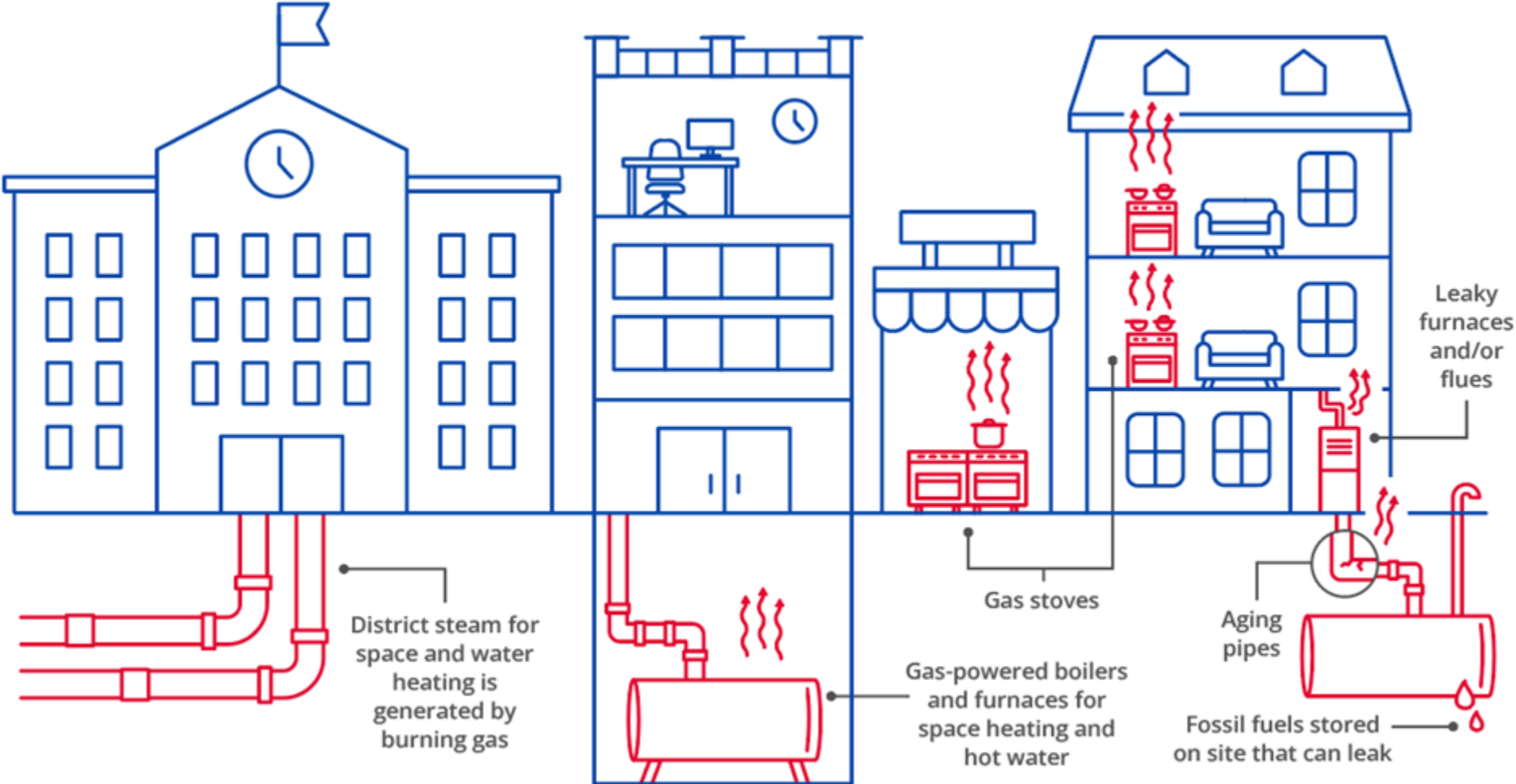
# Buildings are one of the largest sources of Seattle's climate pollution



Source: 2020 Seattle Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory

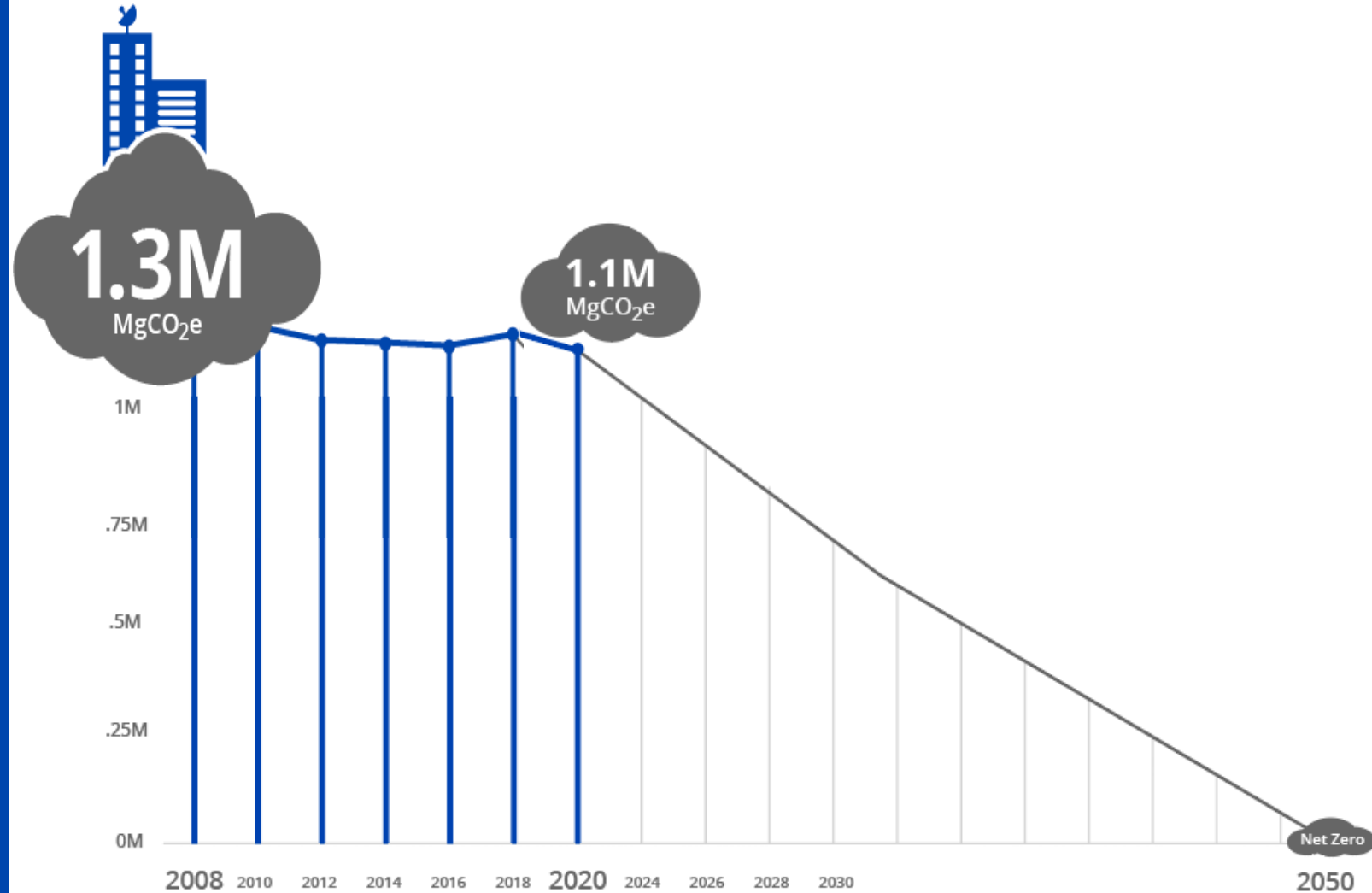


# Building-related emissions mostly come from burning fossil fuels, like gas and oil





# Bold action is needed to significantly reduce climate emissions from buildings



Seattle's policies  
have been  
helping building  
owners take  
important  
climate action



**2011**

Seattle Energy Benchmarking and Reporting



**2019**

Seattle Building Tune-Ups



**2020**

Fossil Fuel-Free Municipal Buildings



**2021**

2018 Seattle Energy Code



**2026**

2019 WA State Clean Buildings Standards

# What is a Building Performance Standard (BPS)?

A **BPS** requires existing buildings to meet carbon emissions or energy performance targets by specific deadlines.

**Decarbonization** - another word for reducing emissions.





**“The Building Emissions Performance Standards (BEPS) policy continues Seattle’s leadership on climate action and represents a milestone for our city’s efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build healthy communities,” said Mayor Bruce Harrell.**

**“This bold legislation will not only create cleaner buildings for people to live, work, and play in, but also hundreds of local jobs and build pathways to careers in the green economy...”**

*Mayor Bruce Harrell,  
BEPS Press Release, December 13, 2023*



# BEPS is one of the most effective climate actions we are taking.

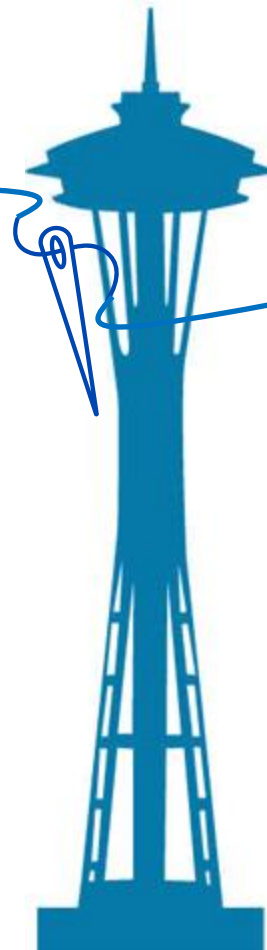
BEPS is projected to:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by about **325,000 metric tons by 2050** from existing large buildings.
- Or **27% decrease in building related emissions** from a 2008 baseline.
- Or the equivalent **72,322 gasoline-powered cars taken off the road** for a year.



# BEPS Policy addresses multiple priorities

Climate crisis and pollution  
Environmental justice  
Downtown revitalization  
Equipment life cycles and market signals  
Workforce and a just transition  
Affordable housing and human services  
City-owned building portfolio



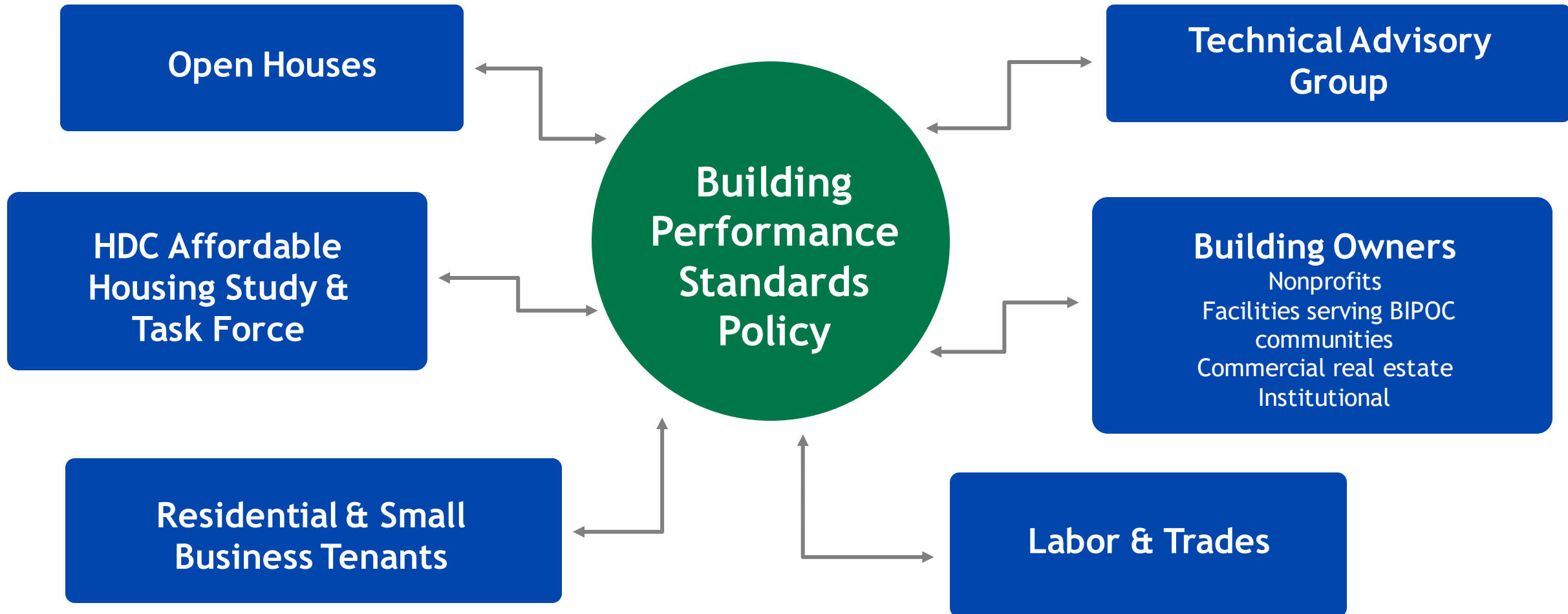


# Seattle BEPS will create jobs

- **Well-paying clean energy jobs** at all levels
- Reduced demand over time for gas-oriented jobs
- Local high-quality jobs that will **directly benefit Seattle-area workers**
- Sending the market signal now allows the labor workforce to **grow, diversify and transition**
- Expand **career paths for women & BIPOC** and **opportunities for WMBE's**
- The City is **investing \$1 million/year** in clean energy career pathway training
- University of Washington establishing one of 10 national hands-on job training centers for clean energy careers, with City as a partner



# Many voices shaped the policy & inform implementation



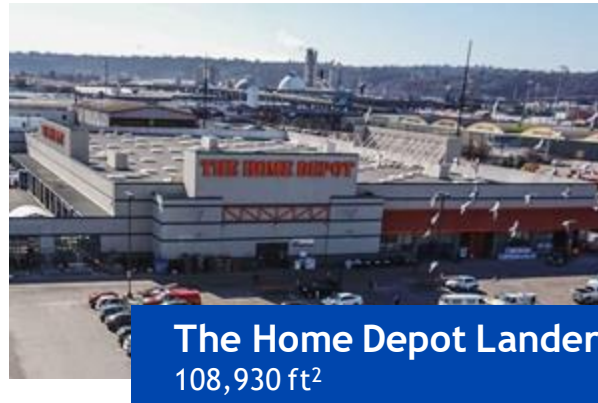




# Seattle Building Emissions Performance Standard Requirements







# Covers about 4,100 Nonresidential & Multifamily Existing Buildings >20,000 square



*(Buildings not included: new construction (covered by Energy Code), industrial/manufacturing, small commercial and multifamily, single-family)*

# What does BEPS Require of Building Owners?

## Every 5 years:

-  **Verify** previous year's building energy use and GHG emissions
-  **Report emissions performance and plan:** Document current performance & equipment, and actions to achieve targets
-  **Meet Greenhouse Gas Intensity (GHGI) Targets:** Three pathways
-  **Achieve:** Net-zero emissions (with narrow exceptions) by 2050

Building Tune-Ups will sunset after its 2023-2026 compliance cycle is done.

# Three compliance pathways for greatest flexibility

## PATH A:

Meet standard or portfolio GHGI emissions targets at each five-year compliance interval



### Compliance includes:

Measure Energy & Emissions  
Energy/Emissions Reduction Planning  
Meet Targets  
Achieve Net Zero by 2041-2050

## PATHS A & B:

Early Adopter Incentives  
and Technical Support

## PATH B:

Small variances but overall can meet compliance with modifications.



### Extensions:

Get a bye on one or more compliance intervals before returning to Path A

### End Use Deductions:

Meet Path A with certain emissions deductions (e.g. restaurant cooking)

### Compliance Payment:

Payment in lieu 2031-2035; revenue supports under-resourced buildings.

## PATH C:

Special consideration and flexibility due to unique circumstances.



### Decarbonization Plan:

Must include energy/GHG emissions audit and cost analysis.

- Net-Zero by 2050
- Low-Emissions by 2050

### Eligibility Criteria Include:

- Conflicts with historic status
- Sub-alt or seismic upgrade
- Infeasible structural/electric upgrades req. to meet net-zero
  - And more...

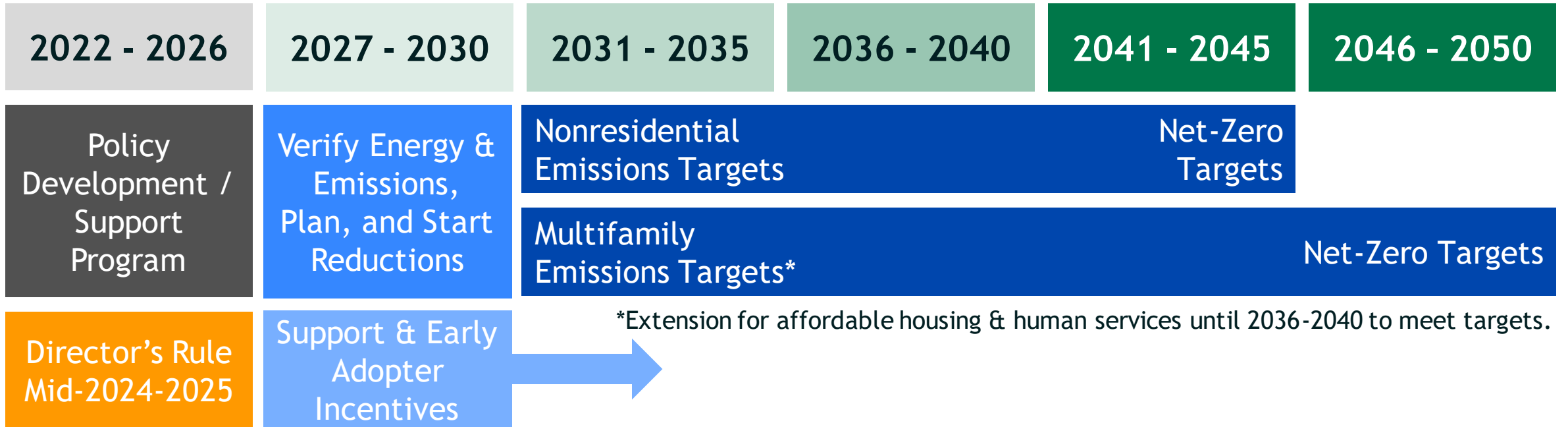


# Leading with Equity

## !! Coaching, Technical Support, Capital Investments !!

- **Low-income/low-rent housing and social services have extension** until 2036-2040 to meet targets
- **Multifamily has longer timeframe to transition to net-zero**, 2046-2050, vs. 2045-2045 for nonresidential
- In each five-year compliance interval, **compliance is phased with largest buildings first and the smallest last.**
- Prescriptive options for multifamily to **simplify compliance**
- **Low-income housing providers, public entities, and nonprofits may comply as an aggregated portfolio** which allows providers to focus efforts according to their own asset needs
- **Cooking end-use exemptions** (2031-2040) that recognize:
  - The **cost burden** of transitioning equipment in small business and BIPOC owned restaurants that are already struggling
  - **Cost, complexity, and tenant disruption** to upgrade electric capacity for individual multifamily units
- **Decarbonization Compliance Plan** option for: infeasibility in low-income housing, structural/electrical constraints, financial distress, landmark, etc.

# What's the Timeline for Compliance?



## State of WA Clean Buildings Performance Standard

2026 - 1 <sup>st</sup> Energy Targets Commercial >50K	2031 >> Future Energy Targets - To be Determined by Rule Commercial & Multifamily >20K
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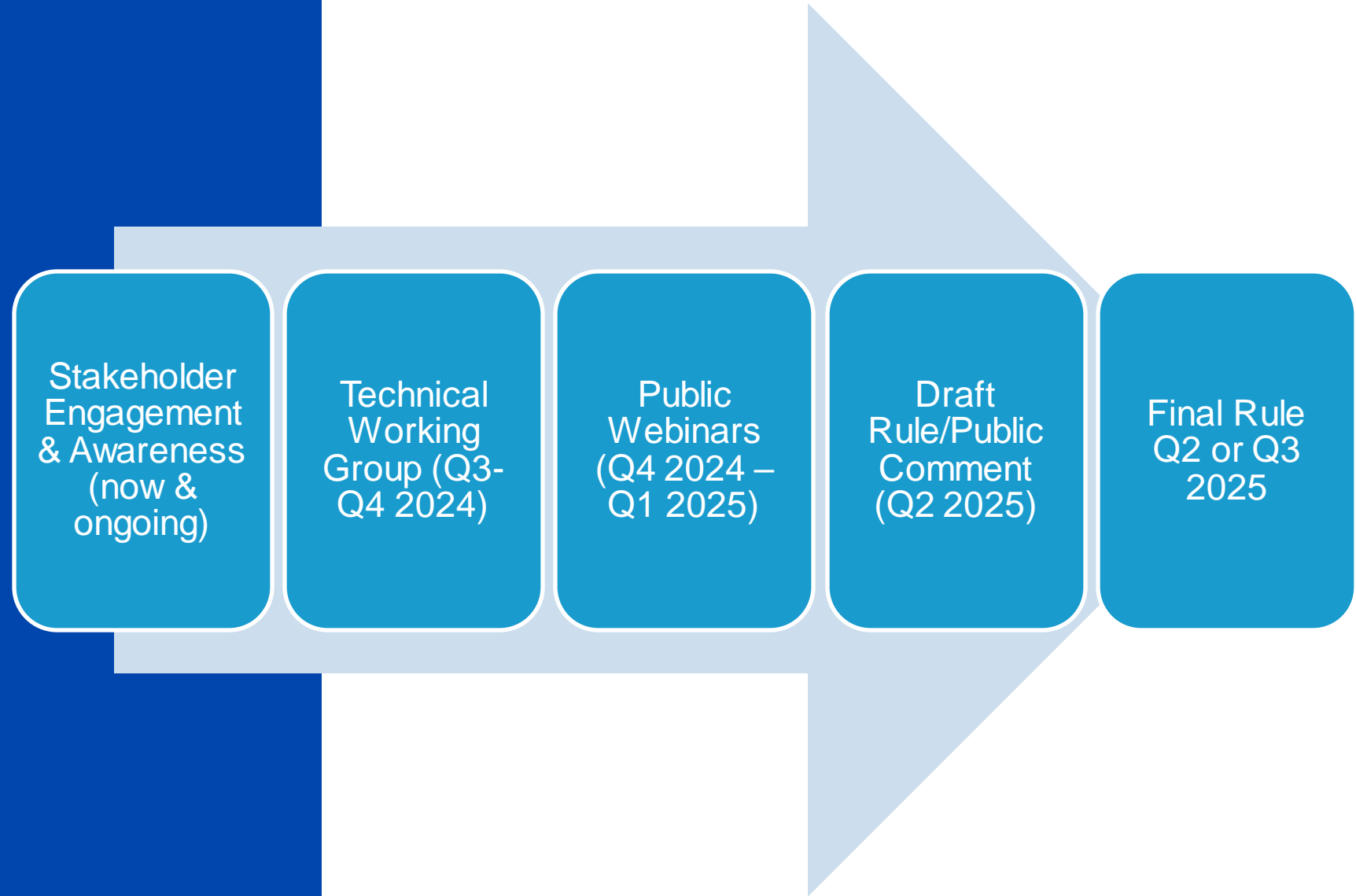
A low-angle photograph of a city street. In the foreground, there are several multi-story brick buildings with numerous windows, some with shutters. The buildings are arranged in a row, and their tops are visible against a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. In the background, two modern skyscrapers rise above the brick buildings. The skyscraper on the left is light-colored with a grid-like facade, while the one on the right is dark and has a curved, ribbed facade. The overall scene suggests a mix of old and new architecture in a dense urban environment.

**What's Happening Now?**



# BEPS Rulemaking Draft Schedule

Per SMC, a Director's Rule is the next step to clarify ordinance elements such as when owners may apply for exemptions and extensions and what documents will be required.



# BEPS Program Design & Support



**Analysis & Case Studies:** Municipal buildings, engineering studies with property owners, partnerships with affordable housing providers



**Funding:** City leverage investment, utility rebates and support, DOE Codes Grant (4/30), financing partnerships, IRA Direct Pay (tax rebates), other state and federal grants



**Program Development:** Partnership development, technology and tool development, customer support expansion, service provider & facility manager training, workforce development (first Compliance period 2027).



**Coaching & Early Action (Clean Buildings Accelerator):** Funding and support of non-profits, affordable housing, under-resourced buildings

# Seattle Clean Building Accelerator Participants

- To date, 40 organizations in light coaching
- More than half representing Frontline communities, nonprofits, class B/C buildings





# Thank you!

[seattle.gov/building-performance-standards](https://seattle.gov/building-performance-standards)



**Seattle**  
Office of Sustainability  
& Environment