

## Montpelier Home Energy Information Ordinance & Vermont Home Energy Profile

Historically, home energy information has been largely invisible in real estate listings and home sales. Montpelier aims to change this by giving potential owners a sense of home energy performance and costs through an intuitive tool that generates a label of energy information and recommendations unique to each home. With the anticipated passage of **Montpelier's Home Energy Information Ordinance**, sellers in the City will be required to provide a **Vermont Home Energy Profile** (VHEP) label when listing a home for sale. The tool is available for **free to all Vermont residents**. The label is intended to provide key home energy insights for residents, potential home buyers, sellers, real estate professionals, and appraisers, in addition to helping achieve Montpelier's goal to become the first state capital to produce or offset all of its energy needs from renewable sources by 2030 and to become a **zero-carbon city by 2050**. One of the key strategies in remediating reduced energy waste is decarbonizing the built environment through energy efficiency improvements. Considering that 73% of homes in Montpelier were built before 1970, efforts are needed to upgrade the energy performance of the city's building stock.

Montpelier seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while also supporting affordability and transparency for residents by building knowledge of home energy needs. According to the Vermont Energy Action Network's *Path to Paris Report*, to reduce thermal sector emissions in order to meet the Paris climate goals, since Montpelier makes up about 1% of the population of Vermont, Montpelier should:

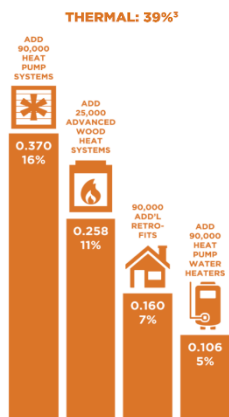


Figure 1 Source: <https://www.eanvt.org/featured-news/data-download/data-download-path-to-paris/>

- Add 900 Heat Pump Systems
- Add 250 Advanced Wood Heating Systems
- Conduct 900 Additional Home Retrofits
- Add 900 Heat Pump Water Heaters

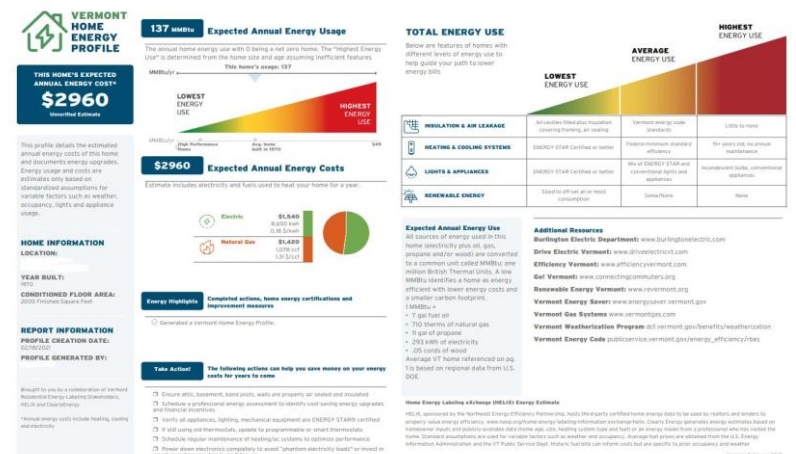


Figure 2: Vermont Home Energy Profile

Home energy labeling stimulates the adoption of home energy efficiency improvements by informing homeowners of which measures might yield the most potential cost and energy savings for a particular property. Visible and accessible home energy information triggers these benefits all while achieving lower energy bills for residents, reduce carbon emissions in the city, and increases comfort, safety and health for homeowners.

### Montpelier's Home Energy Labeling Timeline:

- **November 2018** Energy Efficiency Charter amendment passed a public vote in Montpelier
- **May 2019** Charter Amendment pertaining to Home Energy Labeling passed the legislature
- **July 2019** Listening Session with Real Estate Professionals
- **August 2019** Public Hearing on Home Energy Labeling
- **February 2020** Listening Session with Real Estate Professionals
- **August 2020** Ordinance language reviewed by City's Attorney
- **October 2020** Focus Group Testing and Feedback
- **March 2021** First City Council and Public Hearing of Draft Ordinance

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Where did the funds to develop the VHEP tool come from?

Supplemented by funds from Efficiency Vermont, the regional nonprofit Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships (NEEP) has funded, through support from foundations and the US Department of Energy, the development of the Vermont Home Energy Profile. No city funds were spent on the development of the tool or label. Working group participation was, and remains, a voluntary effort.

### Who determined what kind of label would be used?

The Vermont Energy Labeling Working Group and the Montpelier Energy Efficiency Working Group, consisting of state and city officials, nonprofit organizations, technical partners, and industry experts led the collaborative development of this tool and label. Throughout the multi-year process, the groups solicited public feedback on the tool and label and tested variations of each with a focus group.

### What if I can only guess at the answers to some of the questions VHEP asks?

VHEP is intended to provide an “apples-to-apples” estimate for comparative and educational purposes. It does not require 100% accuracy for all data inputs and for most fields (except the utility data section), a “good faith” guess is acceptable.

### What if I think the estimate generated by VHEP is not an accurate representation of my home?

Adding utility bill information should help the model to create an accurate estimate. Users may also add a comment as an addendum to the profile as an explanation. Users are encouraged to ask questions and report suspected issues via the chatbox available at each step of the tool.

### What if I prefer a more detailed in-home audit rather than the virtual estimate? What if I already have a home energy rating like HES or HERS?

Data from previous on-site assessments are included in VHEP. All Montpelier residents are required to generate a VHEP when listing their home for sale in order to provide an “apples-to-apples” comparison. Homeowners interested in a deeper assessment are encouraged to engage a contractor to conduct an [HES](#). Those planning to build a new home are encouraged to explore [HERS](#).

### What if I have community solar or pay an optional green charge through my utility?

If cost units don’t accurately represent your energy, you are able to add utility data in natural units. If the label generated still does not seem to accurately represent your home, users may add a comment as an addendum to the profile as an explanation. Users are encouraged to ask questions and report suspected issues via the chatbox available at each step of the tool.

### What incentives and resources are available for energy efficiency upgrades?

VHEP provides links to organizations offering resources, rebates, and incentives for applicable energy efficiency measures. [Efficiency Vermont](#) offers a variety of rebates for residents across the state.

### Why is this mandatory for Montpelier sellers?

Emissions from residential buildings make up a considerable portion of Montpelier’s greenhouse gas profile and some residents struggle with home energy affordability and data accessibility. Montpelier is pursuing a mandatory policy in support of local and state goals because analysis of existing policies shows that voluntary approaches don’t generate significant results.

### Why should I trust the VHEP methodology?

VHEP has been developed and tested through a multiyear process involving various stakeholders, including a focus group of residents. Learn more at [clearlyenergy.com/api-model-testing](#) and [neep.org/residential-energy-labeling](#).

### What if I need help completing my VHEP?

You can use the [Home Energy Information Guide](#) for step-by-step instructions for creating your VHEP. You can also watch [this short video](#) that summarizes the instructions.

People are ready to support you if you are still having trouble after completing the steps above. If you live in Montpelier, please reach out to Jasmine Benson at the City for assistance at [jbenson@montpelier-vt.org](mailto:jbenson@montpelier-vt.org). If you live outside of Montpelier, please use the chatbox in the tool to submit questions to the technical developer or email Emmeline Luck at NEEP at [eluck@neep.org](mailto:eluck@neep.org).