





Brad Pilgrim
CEO
Parity Inc.

How Can Condos Prepare for Carbon Compliance?

Compliance will be an important action item for condos and other multi-residential buildings this year.

In 2021, the City of Toronto approved its plan to reduce community-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to net-zero by 2050 or sooner. The program is similar to those already launched in other metropolitan centres like New York City and is surely the harbinger of more to come in other urban centres.

So, what's a condo team to do? The good news is that by leveraging your building system data, deploying effective energy management technology, and engaging your smart partner ecosystem, building owners and operators can successfully – and even painlessly – prepare condo properties for compliance with these new carbon mandates.

Leveraging Data & Technology

Building systems produce a tremendous amount of critical data that can provide crucial insights for owners and operators to drive operational efficiency and support smarter energy consumption.

But simply having access to raw data is not enough. In fact, how the data is tracked and measured is the difference between meaningless piles of data and actionable data intelligence. When gathered and interpreted correctly, data can play a critical role in driving energy efficiencies, in addition to providing clear direction for reducing CO₂ emissions short-term and long-term, system-wide.

While many residential buildings' heating and cooling systems run on

outdated systems, recent advances such as cloud-based, AI-driven solutions, when applied to a building's heating, cooling and ventilation (HVAC) systems, can gather the data necessary to identify operational and energy efficiencies. The result is simultaneously increasing a building's energy efficiency and decreasing its carbon footprint. These efficiencies, in turn, can also result in significant cost savings, offering building management teams both financial and environmental benefits.

How Does it Work?

The introduction of advanced HVAC control technology has revolutionized the optimization and maintenance of HVAC equipment, resulting in improved opportunities for environmental stew-

ardship – without increased capital investment costs.

Typically, the process starts with an assessment – you know the saying: you can't manage what you can't measure. An assessment helps identify the precise amount of energy required to optimize a building's HVAC system, as well as the gaps in performance leading to energy waste and negative environmental impact.

By learning the energy use patterns of a building, cloud-based platforms can adjust HVAC system set points in real-time. In this way, HVAC costs can be reduced by up to 30% and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by up to 50%, depending on the fuel source. The best part? Platforms like this typically require no upfront cost – they can be installed alongside existing building systems and are paid for by the energy savings the system delivers.

Likewise, this technology works best when easy-to-access dashboards offer property managers, condo board members and mechanical vendors a comprehensive view of energy performance, whether in one building or across an entire real estate portfolio.

When specialized technology like this is properly integrated into building systems and equipment is well-calibrated, it is an invaluable tool for planning for and maintaining the efforts needed to meet the requirements of these very necessary regulations designed to protect our environment and our future.

In addition, energy management platforms can help reduce the need for major retrofits as part of an overall compliance strategy, as they can often be expensive, wasteful and disruptive.

Smart Partners

The final piece of the planning for compliance puzzle is your network of knowledgeable building professionals who understand your objectives and are committed to working with you to achieve them.

It is critical to work with an innovative, helpful team that will be there to support your operational strategies over time. When the system and the technology are supported by a great team, including technicians, engineers, designers, sales reps, and customer service folks, then the building can function better, delivering the optimal results – including compli-

ance with carbon emissions mandates.

In summary, these net-zero regulations are an important and welcome policy change that will enable multi-family buildings to adopt a more intelligent, comprehensive view of energy consumption and efficiency. And while these goals represent a critical step for environmental stewardship, they need not be overwhelming. With readily available, innovative options for meaningful data collection and the implementation of smart-energy

management technology, sustainability goals and meeting carbon emission reduction mandates are not merely possible; they are entirely achievable. ■

Brad Pilgrim is CEO of Parity, the North American software solution driving innovation to transform building automation tech, eliminate energy waste, reduce CO2 emissions, and advance ESG initiatives for real estate owners and operators.
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