




MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council

CC: Marc A. Ott, City Manager

FROM: Larry Weis, General Manager 

DATE: July 2, 2013

SUBJECT: Data Collection Process for Resolution No. 20130523-069

This memo will serve as the report on the data collection process related to Council Resolution No. 20130523-069 that focuses on measuring any possible effects of multi-family energy efficiency rebate participation on rental prices. Based on the resolution, the data points to be collected are:

- Location of multi-family units, description of work completed, total costs of upgrades, and owner's share of costs
- Rental prices at time of application to rebate program and in subsequent years
- Number of units and bedroom mix in multifamily complex
- Whether electric bills are paid by tenants or by the complex
- Whether rebate recipients initiated rebate applications after completing ECAD audit
- Estimated monthly savings per square foot per participating property
- Data showing how the average rents of participating multifamily properties compare to the overall market

Additional data elements to be collected include:

- Apartment class
- Rebate participation date
- Rent report date
- Contact information

Austin Energy reviewed possible sources of apartment-related data. The City Demographer's Office and the Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Office utilize various external data sources but do not collect such data themselves.

A critical element to this data collection is consistency of data sets. In order to best compare rental prices across complexes and across time, rental prices should originate from one source. Additionally, all rebate-related information should have one source. A single data source ensures consistency and validity of results.

To allow for a single reporting point, the data collection will be the responsibility of Austin Energy. The currently defined data sources include:

- Austin Energy Multifamily Rebate Program participation data
- Austin Investors Interest multifamily apartment data

Austin Energy continues to investigate other sources of apartment data. At this time, no other data source has proven to have the depth of needed information in a time frame that is consistent with the reporting requirements of the resolution. However, should another data source prove more beneficial to the reporting process, it will be included in future reports.

The process to collect and report on the data is as follows:

- Austin Energy will develop a secured database in which the data will be stored.
- Austin Energy will collect rebate-related information in real time.
- Austin Energy will collect apartment-related data from an external source quarterly as it is updated by Austin Investors Interest.
- Austin Energy will assess statistical differences between rebate participants and non participants; between levels of rebates; and across other related multifamily demographics.
- Austin Energy will report semi-annually on the possible relationship between energy efficiency rebate participation and rent prices.

The goals of this recommended data collection process are to create consistency across data sets, provide for a single source of information, and to allow for high quality data comparability. Data collection will begin no later than September 1, 2013. Austin Energy has shared this approach with the Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Office and the Austin Apartment Association – both found it to be viable; staff will present the plan to the Community Development Commission at their meeting on July 9.