

From growing costs to big savings, thanks to submetering



Aubrey C. Phillibert
FirstService Residential Senior Property Manager
Park City Estates, Queens, NY

About NYSERDA's Programs for Multifamily Buildings

NYSERDA offers a portfolio of programs and incentives for owners, facility managers, developers and condo/co-op boards of multifamily buildings with five or more units. Our initiatives make it easier to assess, fund, implement and measure energy efficiency upgrades that improve building performance and your bottom line.

Residents of Park City Estates, a co-op in Queens, NY, had a relatively common problem for apartment-dwellers. They all paid the same electricity bill, whether or not they were conservative with their energy use.

Each of the complex's five buildings were master metered, so it was impossible to bill residents individually. To lower maintenance costs

and reduce building-wide energy consumption, Park City Estates owners decided to upgrade to electricity submetering and give residents control over their electricity use.

After installing electricity submeters in the complex's 1,049 units and taking advantage of \$265,156 in incentives from the Advanced Submetering Program (ASP), part of the Multifamily

Energy Performance Portfolio offered by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), **Park City Estates residents only pay for the electricity they actually consume.**

They're changing their behavior, finding even more ways to reduce their bills and their impact on the environment.



Rising costs prompt fresh look at submetering

When FirstService Residential, formerly known as Cooper Square Realty, took over management of the 1,049-unit Park City Estates in 2010, the complex had been experiencing double-digit maintenance charge increases for five years.

“It was self-managed, and it seemed that the operating expenses were spiraling out of control,” said Aubrey Phillibert, the FirstService Residential senior property manager put in charge of Park City Estates.

The complex’s board had already been exploring submetering as early as 2008. But the project was finally accepted by shareholders in 2011, after Phillibert distributed information about the potential for financial savings.

Clear communication eases the installation process

Each of the five buildings that make up Park City Estates had been operating with its own master electric meter. Taking advantage of incentives from the Advanced Submetering Program, part of NYSERDA’s Multifamily Energy Performance Portfolio, the board approved Intech-21’s proposal to install submeters in all of Park City Estates’ units.

Installation proceeded quickly. In just five months, 99 percent of Park City Estates’ units had been converted. “We tried to be as accommodating as possible,” Phillibert said. “The superintendent of each building was present at each greeting.”

The superintendent and the installation team put residents’ minds at ease, explaining that there would be no damage to their living space—and reminded them of the upside of submetering. “We showed them how to do a back-of-the-envelope calculation of what we could save them,” Phillibert says.

All the communication worked. Despite its large scale, Park City Estates’ submetering project proceeded smoothly.

Declining costs, increasing property values

Park City Estates looks a lot different today than it did a year ago—especially after dark.

“People aren’t leaving their lights on as much at night,” Phillibert said. “You can see the difference. People are much more conscious of energy usage now.” The consciousness is paying off.

Following the submetering conversion and other energy-saving initiatives, the building cut maintenance costs by 15 percent. And property values are rising.

“Values were dropping in the down economy, but we started picking up faster than others because of the 15 percent maintenance reduction,” Phillibert says. “We’re also increasing quality of life.”

Background & Challenges

- 1,049-unit, five-building Queens co-op complex built in 1960, with one master meter for electricity in each building
- All residents paid the same amount for electricity monthly, regardless of usage

Solution

- NYSERDA-approved Intech 21 submeters installed in each apartment
- Conversion qualified for \$265,156 in incentives from NYSERDA, including \$250 per meter (up to 50 percent of the cost of the system) and \$1,500 per master meter

Benefits

- NYSERDA ASP incentives reduced project cost by 49 percent
- 15 percent savings in complex maintenance costs
- Residents only pay for the electricity they use and can make informed decisions to further reduce energy expenses

Owner	Co-operatively owned
Number of Units	1,049
Project Financials	
Total Investment	\$540,235
NYSERDA Incentives	\$265,156
Project Cost Savings	49 percent
Reduction in Maintenance Cost	15 percent

“Be proactive in communicating and educating your community. Move quickly. With the incentives, it makes sense financially for the individual and the corporation. It’s a major benefit to both. We’re seriously reducing our negative impact on the environment.”

—Aubrey Phillibert, senior property manager, Park City Estates

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Participate in NYSERDA’s Multifamily Performance Program and take advantage of funding for whole-building energy assessments and low-cost financing for energy upgrades through Green Jobs – Green NY. Green Jobs – Green NY is a statewide effort to strengthen our communities through energy efficiency. It enables New Yorkers to make a significant difference in our homes, businesses and neighborhoods—making them more comfortable, more sustainable, and more economically sound. Green Jobs – Green NY is administered by NYSERDA and made available by the Green Jobs – Green New York Act of 2009.



About NYSERDA

New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), a public benefit corporation, offers objective information and analysis, innovative programs, technical expertise and funding to help New Yorkers increase energy efficiency, save money, use renewable energy, and reduce their reliance on fossil fuels. NYSERDA professionals work to protect our environment and create clean-energy jobs. NYSERDA has been developing partnerships to advance innovative energy solutions in New York since 1975.

