Comfort Settings Project Overview

We appreciate the support of MAC staff and the MSP community as we work together to meet MAC's 2030 sustainability goals. Beginning in June 2022, the MAC began implementing comfort settings for heating and cooling across the MAC campus.

Comfort settings are established temperature ranges in which most people feel comfortable, as determined by the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASRAE). **The range the MAC has initially set for 2022 is 72-76 °F in the summer and 70-74 °F in the winter**.

The MAC piloted comfort settings from June to December 2021 in Terminal 1 C13-15 gate areas and the Main Mall Food Court as well as at the General Office. The pilot demonstrated how the MAC can reduce its carbon footprint and save money, which led to the decision to roll the program throughout MSP. This effort will help achieve one our sustainability goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent by 2030 and help establish MSP as an industry leader.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACTS: It's estimated that adopting these comfort settings will account for about 5 percent of these greenhouse gas reductions – about 1,500 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent each year – for us to reach our goal to reduce our 2030 goal. Emmy Waldhart, MAC Sustainability Manager, states "The MAC board has committed to an 80 percent reduction in our greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, and we have made great progress to date, already reaching 37 percent of our goal from a 2014/15 baseline. We have amazing ideas like the comfort settings coming out of our sustainability working groups and their action planning efforts. We are excited to engage with MAC staff as we work together to reach our sustainability goals."

FINANCIAL IMPACTS: Once the rollout is completed, it's estimated the initiative will immediately begin saving $480,000 per year over the next 40 years for a cumulative savings of $19 million. In the pilot phase, six-month savings were $4,700 in the Terminal 1 C13-15 gate areas and $470 in the Main Food Court at Terminal 1. Tim Simon, MAC vice president of Finance and Revenue Development, states, "The comfort settings have and will continue to save money and reduce our carbon footprint today and into the future. As a member of the Executive Sustainability Committee, it's exciting to see recommendations brought forth and then put into action to make a difference."

INDUSTRY LEADING IMPACTS: The MAC's Energy Management Center has a Building Automation System to maintain the comfort settings and all other heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) needs. Most businesses set a temperature range for different times of the year for their facilities and individuals are not able to request a change. Responding to individual requests for temperature requires staff time and energy. Jamie Chatelle, the MAC chief engineer for the Energy Management Center, states, "The MAC has always taken customer service very seriously. By creating uniform comfort settings, we'll be able to keep people comfortable more efficiently, save energy and money, and ultimately do better for our environment. It will also allow us to focus more on maintaining equipment to help ensure its reliability."

MAC Energy Management Center staff are continuously monitoring temperatures across campus through a Building Automation System. Staff monitor all HVAC system parameters 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. If one of the parameters goes out of range, the center gets an alarm and try to resolve it on the computer if possible. If that doesn't work, the Energy Management Center dispatches someone to physically go out and check what is going on. The MAC Energy Management Center is focused on maintaining these systems and will not be responding to individual requests for temperature changes.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:

For any questions or comments about the comfort settings project, contact Emmy Waldhart, MAC Sustainability Manager at emmy.waldhart@mspmac.org or 612-726-8195.

For any general heating and cooling issues, contact the Energy Management Center at 612-726-5505.