



San Mateo Works to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

City Approves New Reach Codes Requiring More Building Electrification

San Mateo, CA – The City of San Mateo is taking a bold step to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and will become one of the first in the region to enact green building reach codes that aim to make existing homes more sustainable.

Starting Jan. 1, 2023, the new reach codes will require certain types of residential remodel projects to move toward electrification and reduce reliance on natural gas. Like many local jurisdictions, San Mateo is strengthening its local requirements for all-electric construction in new buildings, but only a handful of other cities have also applied electrification requirements to existing buildings. Buildings account for nearly 38% of the greenhouse gas emissions in the City, and reach codes are an important step to address climate change.

“San Mateo is taking a big step forward in addressing climate change and working to make sure people have access to clean, safe and healthy home environments,” said Mayor Rick Bonilla. “These new reach codes that go into effect on Jan. 1, 2023 are an important component of our work to lead our community toward a more sustainable future.”

The new rules for existing residences will be triggered when a property owner plans certain types of home improvement projects, such as replacing a water heater during an addition or alteration project or installing or replacing an air conditioner. This is a thoughtful approach to ambitious measures, and will help reduce potential financial hardships on property owners as it is more cost-effective to transition to electric equipment when planned for in advance as part of a larger home improvement project. The rules also provide an economic hardship exemption under certain circumstances.

Reach Code	Impacted Buildings	Reach Code Requirements for Remodels
Electric-readiness: panel capacity	All residential buildings	Requires panel replacement and panel upgrade projects to include panel capacity/breaker space for future electrification
Electric-readiness: outlets installed	Single family homes and duplexes	Requires all residential kitchen and laundry renovations include installation of an outlet to allow for the use of electric appliances in the future
Heat pump air conditioning	Single family homes and duplexes	Requires installation of heat pump air conditioning when new air conditioning is installed or replaced
Pools and outdoor equipment	All residential buildings	Prohibits the extension of fuel gas infrastructure into the backyard for uses such as fire pits, grills, and pools
Heat pump water heaters	Single family homes and duplexes	Requires heat pump water heater installation during addition and alteration projects that include water heater replacement

The City's current reach codes require new construction of all residential and office buildings to be all-electric.

Starting Jan. 1, 2023, the City will require all-electric construction for any new building including commercial properties, with limited exceptions such as in commercial kitchens. The City's updated reach codes will also require enhanced electric vehicle charging infrastructure beyond state requirements. Learn more at

www.cityofsanmateo.org/reachcodes.

The City and sustainability experts carefully analyzed availability of electric equipment, upfront installation costs and utility bill impacts, as well as grid capacity in developing the reach codes. The City is working with Peninsula Clean Energy, which provides virtually 100% carbon-free electricity, and PG&E to address electricity impacts. The City's enhanced reach codes align with the state's update of California's Building Code, which occurs every 3 years. They are also an important part of the City's Climate Action Plan and the San Mateo City Council's strategic initiative to be a socially responsible leader dedicated to enhancing environmental sustainability for current and future generations.

In addition to the new reach codes, the City will also look to develop a decarbonization strategy that will analyze buildings in the city, evaluate different policy approaches and include a roadmap to decarbonize existing buildings with a target date to phase out gas service in the community.