



**City of Piedmont
Planning & Building Department
Sustainability Division**

Reach Code Community Forum (4/20/22, 6:00-7:30pm)

Reason for event

In February 2021, the City Council adopted reach codes that require energy efficiency measures to be included in new construction and existing building renovations. Reach codes are local amendments that go above and beyond existing California building codes to improve the energy efficiency of buildings and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The primary goal of the reach codes is to help Piedmont meet its Climate Action Plan 2.0 emission reduction goals by reducing natural gas use and increasing energy efficiency in buildings. Since the reach codes went into effect in June 2021, City staff have made it a priority to assess the implementation of the policy. These efforts have included evaluation of building permits and the effectiveness of the policy, in addition to community outreach and engagement. With the reach codes in effect for just under a year, the City convened stakeholders on April 20th to discuss progress of the policy's implementation and to launch the 2022 reach code public engagement process. The purpose of the Community Forum was to provide residents an opportunity to learn about reach code implementation and evaluation efforts, as well as to provide feedback on the codes in advance of the 2022 Building Code. Upon adoption of the 2022 Energy Code, the City will also need to adopt any local amendments to the Code, including re-adoption of the Reach Codes.



Format of event

This event was organized by City Staff as a town hall-style Community Forum in Community Hall. The Forum began at 6:00pm with a presentation from Alyssa Dykman, Sustainability Program Manager. This presentation was followed by a question-and-answer session, after which attendees participated in a breakout session. The breakout session was an opportunity for participants to collaborate with one another, City Staff from the Planning & Building Department, and provide facilitated feedback. Following the breakout session, attendees heard from Chris Hunter of StopWaste about BayREN's programs and resources for single-family energy upgrades.

Participant feedback

Event participants widely agreed the City's reach codes are useful for helping the City meet its CAP 2.0 goals, and they were in favor of the City explaining the impact of the policy's effectiveness and the benefits of the policy in terms of greenhouse gas emission reductions and cost savings. During the breakout session, participants were asked to review the City's reach codes



currently in place, and to subsequently identify implementation obstacles and possible amendments for staff to consider with the 2022 Energy Code. Key themes of implementation obstacles identified by participants included: lack of clarity of the policy as currently written, particularly for rental units and renters; complications around window replacement projects and older homes having low electrical loads with existing panels; the possibility that homeowners may break up projects or phase repairs to avoid triggering the policy's requirements; and lack of resources for building permit applicants. Participants' ideas for possible amendments to the reach code included: increasing the scope of the reach codes; expanding the policy to incorporate exterior alterations in efforts to reduce outdoor natural gas use; having the reach codes be applied and triggered based on cumulative project cost over a predetermined time period; having the City provide additional educational materials of the policy to building permit applicants and homeowners; having access to consultants, organizations or external resources for reach code application beyond the City's Planning & Building Department; and having the City provide additional incentives to layer on with existing regional and state programs by establishing a permanent revenue source for electrification (e.g., User Utility Tax).

Next steps

City staff discussed the tentative timeline for adoption of the 2022 Energy Code and re-adoption of the reach codes. With the 2022 Energy Code in effect January 1, 2023, City staff are seeking to re-adopt the reach codes prior to this date in the fall. Staff encouraged participants to continue to be involved in the 2022 reach code public engagement process, including two upcoming events: staff's update on the implementation of reach codes and related updates to state law during the May 2nd City Council meeting and an online Reach Code Community Survey open until May 20th. Additional engagement opportunities will occur throughout the year to help inform the development of and to provide public comment on the draft reach codes.

A link to the May 2nd City Council staff report can be found here:

<https://www.piedmont.ca.gov/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=18514533>

A link to the Online Reach Code Community survey can be found here:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfqEj2z7vQnI0wOKsuf2WYyRJE2mRjd1OCKRcMueq8O9hy7cw/viewform>

A link to the City's reach code website page can be found here:

https://www.piedmont.ca.gov/services_departments/planning_building/about_building_reach_code_information