



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

**2022 Reach Code Community Survey**

**About the Survey**

The online survey was created in Google Forms, sent out over several City email lists, and posted on the City's website news section. The survey was available from 4/13/2020 to 5/20/2022. 87 Piedmont residents opted to participate in the survey.

**Key Findings**

- An overwhelming share of respondents are very concerned about climate change and think it is an emergency.
- A majority of respondents have heard about Piedmont's Climate Action Plan 2.0 and think it is important for the City to meet its greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.
- While a solid majority of respondents have heard a little or nothing at all about the City's reach codes, many support the City's efforts to encourage less use of natural gas in buildings through the policy.
- A majority of respondents strongly support the following requirements of the current reach code policy: new detached accessory dwelling units (ADUs) must use all-electric appliances; a laundry area renovation must include electrical outlets for future appliance installation; and an electrical panel upgrade must include capacity in the panel to accommodate future electrification of all appliances in the residence.
- When respondents were asked if they had any questions about the interpretation of certain reach code requirements in an open-ended question, some mentioned it was unclear whether home energy efficiency improvements already taken would apply to future renovations and if there would be additional required changes if undergoing a remodel.
- When asked what changes they would make to the reach codes to make them more acceptable in an open-ended question, many respondents mentioned increasing the \$25,000 renovation threshold given current construction costs and providing financial incentives to help homeowners subsidize the cost of improvements.
- When asked how the City should help support residents implementing the reach codes in a multiple-choice question, many respondents indicated their support for establishing an expedited permit processing for heat pumps, reducing permit fees for heat pumps, and increasing public outreach about the options and incentives for electric appliances.
- A majority of respondents strongly support the following elements of the 2022 Energy Code: encouraging electric heat pump technology for space and water heating; expanding solar photovoltaic system and battery storage standards; and establishing electric-ready requirements when natural gas is installed.



## Background

- City staff are evaluating Piedmont’s local amendments to the California Building Energy Code (“Reach Codes”) that have been in effect since June 1, 2021. In advance of the 2022 California Building Code set to take effect January 1, 2023, staff are evaluating the current reach code in place. When the 2022 California Building Energy Code is updated, Piedmont must adopt the new Code and any local amendments (i.e., reach codes) to the Code.
- The purpose of the survey was to gauge residents’ thoughts on the current reach codes, and potential changes to them, so staff could hear residents’ feedback and draft the 2022 reach codes accordingly, before bringing them to City Council.
- The survey was designed by staff in the Planning and Building Departments.
- The survey was first sent out to residents, through multiple city email lists, on April 13, 2022; shortly thereafter, a news blurb was written for the city website landing page, linking to the survey.
- The survey ran until May 20, 2022. In total, 87 people self-selected to participate in the survey.
- The survey included a mix of multiple choice and short answer questions.
- Below, staff have listed many of the multiple-choice questions posed in the survey, along with residents’ answers to those questions. Staff have also summarized the basic takeaways from respondents’ written answers.

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](https://www.piedmont.ca.gov/services_departments/planning_building/about_building_reach_code_information)

### **Selected Multiple Choice Questions and Answers:**

#### **Q: How concerned are you about climate change?**

78%	Very concerned
16%	Somewhat concerned
5%	Not very concerned
1%	Not at all concerned

#### **Q: Do you think that climate change is an emergency, or not?**

79%	It’s an emergency
21%	Don’t think so



**Q: How often do you discuss climate change with your family and friends?**

- 48% Often
- 38% Occasionally
- 13% Rarely
- 1% Never

**Q: How worried are you that the following impacts of climate change might harm Piedmont?**

	Very worried	Moderately worried	A little worried	Not at all worried
Drought	66%	20%	9%	5%
Water shortages	62%	24%	9%	5%
Reduced snowpack	55%	21%	11%	13%
Wildfire	54%	21%	22%	3%
Extreme heat	44%	31%	16%	9%
Electricity power outages	39%	32%	22%	7%
Air pollution	38%	28%	24%	10%
Water pollution	22%	28%	30%	20%
Agricultural pests and diseases	18%	28%	34%	20%
Flooding	12%	9%	25%	54%

**Q: How much have you heard, seen, or read recently about the City of Piedmont’s Climate Action Plan 2.0?**

- 30% A great deal
- 56% A little
- 14% Nothing at all

**Q: The purpose of the Climate Action Plan 2.0 is to support statewide efforts to reduce the pollution that causes climate change; provide a pathway for Piedmont to reduce greenhouse gas emissions within City boundaries by 40% by 2030; and be on track to reduce emissions within City boundaries 80% by 2050. How important do you think it is for the City of Piedmont to meet these objectives?**

- 37% Extremely important
- 36% Very important
- 13% Somewhat important
- 12% Not important
- 3% Not at all important



**Q: In 2019, the two largest sources of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Piedmont were natural gas use for space and water heating and petroleum-fueled personal vehicle use. In order for the City to reach its GHG emission reduction goals, Piedmonters will need to take significant action. Do you support or oppose the following actions to help reduce GHG emissions?**

	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose
Install rooftop solar or solar water heating systems	63%	26%	6%	5%
Increase the number of trips made by biking or walking	50%	37%	12%	1%
Drive an electric or other zero emissions vehicle	49%	38%	10%	3%
Increase home efficiency through energy audits and retrofits	46%	30%	15%	9%
Increase the number of trips on public transportation	35%	46%	16%	3%
Switch to electric appliances (e.g., heat pumps, induction stoves)	31%	37%	17%	15%

**Q: Overall, do you support or oppose the City of Piedmont’s efforts to encourage less use of natural gas in buildings through Reach Codes?**

- 40% Strongly support
- 30% Somewhat support
- 14% Somewhat oppose
- 16% Strongly oppose

**Q: Prior to taking this survey, how much have you heard, seen, or read recently about the City of Piedmont’s Reach Codes?**

- 37% A great deal
- 48% A little
- 15% Nothing at all



**Q: Listed below are the various Reach Code requirements for low-rise residential buildings. Please indicate if you support or oppose each requirement.**

	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose
New detached accessory dwelling units (ADUs) must use all-electric appliances	59%	21%	11%	9%
A laundry area renovation must include electrical outlets for future appliance installations	52%	31%	9%	8%
An electrical panel upgrade must include capacity in the panel to accommodate future electrification of all appliances in the residence	51%	26%	9%	14%
A kitchen area renovation must include electrical outlets for future appliance installation	49%	33%	9%	9%
New buildings must be designed to only use electric appliances	49%	26%	10%	15%
Projects that include an entirely new level or expand the total roof area by 30% or more, must install solar panels on the roof	47%	28%	11%	14%
A renovation project that costs \$100,000 or more must include two energy efficient insulation or heating system electrification improvements to include in the renovation	43%	23%	15%	19%
A renovation project that costs \$25,000 or more must include an energy efficient insulation or heating system electrification improvement to include in the renovation	38%	20%	16%	26%



**Q: Next, as part of the Reach Code requirements, homeowners making renovations that cost more than \$25,000 are required to make one insulation or electrification upgrade from a predetermined list to reduce the use of natural gas. Renovations costing more than \$100,000 are required to make two insulation or electrification upgrades. Please indicate if you support or oppose the following insulation or electrification upgrades.**

	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose
Installation of R-3 insulation on all accessible hot water piping and low flow water fixtures	49%	31%	10%	10%
Installation of R-38 attic insulation, air sealing, and duct sealing in all accessible areas of the building	48%	30%	11%	11%
Replacement of incandescent and CFL lamps with LED lamps in all light fixtures and installation of vacancy sensors	48%	28%	12%	14%
Installation of R-19 insulation at raised floor assemblies	40%	33%	15%	12%
Implementation of one or more recommendations specified in a Home Energy Score or Home Energy Audit completed in the last 5 years	33%	33%	13%	21%
Replacement of fuel gas water heater with an electric heat pump water heater (or other high efficiency electric water heating system)	31%	31%	16%	22%
Replacement of fuel gas furnace with an electric heat pump system (or other high efficiency electric system)	29%	31%	17%	23%

**Q: Of the ways the City of Piedmont can help residents support the implementation of Reach Codes and transition off natural gas, which is most important to you?’**

- 25% Divert a portion of the City’s General Funds from other uses to support the creation of an electrification rebate fund to help offset the cost of switching to electric appliances
- 22% Reduce permit fees for electric heat pumps (HVAC, water heaters)



- 14% Through a City vote, establish a carbon tax on natural gas that dedicates its revenue to energy efficiency, renewable energy, and fuel switching incentives for residents
- 13% Establish an expedited permit processing for electric heat pumps (HVAC, water heaters)
- 9% Increase public outreach and community engagement about the options and incentives for electric appliances
- 5% Increase the City's User Utility Tax to act as a revenue neutral carbon tax on natural gas
- 3% Modify the limits placed on mechanically generated noise for heat pump installations
- 8% Other

**Q: Looking ahead, the 2022 Energy Code becomes effective January 1, 2023. The Code builds on California's technology innovations, encouraging inclusion of market-ready electric products in new construction. Please indicate if you support or oppose the following key areas the 2022 Energy Code focuses on for newly constructed homes and businesses:**

	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose
Encouraging electric heat pump technology for space and water heating	60%	28%	6%	6%
Expanding solar photovoltaic (PV) system and battery storage standards	56%	30%	8%	6%
Establishing electric-ready requirements when natural gas is installed	55%	29%	10%	6%
Strengthening ventilation standards to improve indoor air quality	40%	37%	18%	5%

**Takeaways from Written Responses:**

- When respondents were asked what they have heard about Piedmont's reach codes, many noted the policy's application to remodels and new construction, as well as the intent of the reach codes in reducing natural gas use. Others noted reach codes being stronger than the state's energy code and the policy's goal to increase energy efficiency. Some described reach codes as an overreach of government and found them concerning because they believed gas stoves would not be allowed if they were undergoing a remodel (Piedmont's reach codes do not require this). Most respondents learned about Piedmont's



reach codes through local media (e.g., Piedmont Post, Piedmont Exedra, Piedmont Civic Association, League of Women Voters of Piedmont) followed by the City's [website](#).

- When respondents were asked if they had any questions about the interpretation of certain reach code requirements, some mentioned it was unclear whether home energy efficiency improvements already taken would apply to future renovations and if there would be additional required changes if undergoing a remodel. Others questioned how California could provide enough power to cover the state's transition to electric appliances and devices. Several respondents noted they do not have the financial resources to make reach code related improvements and wondered what financial rebates, incentives, and grants are available to help supplement improvement costs.
- When asked what changes, if any, they would make to the reach codes to make them more acceptable, many respondents mentioned increasing the \$25,000 renovation threshold given current construction costs and providing financial incentives to help homeowners subsidize the cost of improvements. Others mentioned having the reach codes applied to all buildings in the City (regardless of use or type) and expanding the policy to support solar and energy storage and electric vehicle adoption. Some were frustrated with the reach code requirements and had concerns about electrical service being inadequate to make improvements.
- When asked how the City of Piedmont should help support residents implementing the reach codes and transitioning off of natural gas, many respondents indicated their support for establishing an expedited permit processing for electric heat pumps, reducing permit fees for heat pumps, and increasing public outreach and community engagement about the options and incentives for electric appliances. Similar shares are in favor of diverting a portion of the City's General Fund from other uses to support the creation of an electrification rebate program. Others supported establishing a carbon tax on natural gas that dedicates its revenue to energy efficiency, renewable energy, and fuel switching incentives for residents through a City-wide vote, modifying the limits placed on mechanically generated noise for heat pump installations, and increasing the City's User Utility Tax to act as a revenue neutral carbon tax on natural gas.