FRONTRUNNER: COUNTY OF SAN MATEO

SAN MATEO COUNTY DEVELOPS BOLD REACH CODE PACKAGE AS PART OF REGIONAL LEADERSHIP

OVERVIEW

San Mateo County straddles nearly the whole of the San Francisco Peninsula, containing both dense urban centers and remote rural areas from San Francisco International Airport at the northern end to Silicon Valley at the southern end. The county includes nearly 58 miles of coastline on the western edge and more than 20 miles of San Francisco Bay shoreline on the eastern side as well as 20 local jurisdictions. While the county represents the extraordinary diversity of the entire state (the county's website features a tagline "All of California in One County"), it has worked hard to nurture leadership and collaboration in building and energy efficiency standards for the county's stakeholders and those of the local jurisdictions it encompasses.



An aerial view of Montara, on the San Mateo county coastline.

CREATING STAKEHOLDER CONSENSUS FOR POWERFUL REACH CODE PROVISIONS

The County of San Mateo's Office of Sustainability worked collaboratively with Peninsula Clean Energy, the County's official electricity provider, to identify reach code options that would reduce the use of fossil fuels and that were supported by the community. Numerous outreach events were conducted, including activities focused on public sector employees, charrettes with the developer and builder community, and focused outreach to stakeholders already active with new construction projects.

These activities enabled the county team to identify the key aspects of the provisions that would be most impactful in moving the County toward its Climate Action Plan goals. "Climate change is the greatest challenge of our time and we must do everything possible to embrace carbon free options," noted County Supervisor Dave Pine.

Ultimately, the County team structured its reach code package along three components:

Building electrification for all building types

- Single-family and ADUs: All-electric
- Low-Rise residential: All-electric
- High Rise residential: All-electric
- Commercial buildings: All-electric*

*Some exceptions for the use of natural gas for cooking and space heating are provided for specific nonresidential building types.

Mandatory solar for nonresidential and high rise residential:

- 2W/ft^2 or right-sized PV system installed

Electric vehicle readiness across all building types:

- Single-family: Level 2 circuit installed
- Low Rise & High-Rise residential:

Level 2 circuit installed at 10% of spaces

Level 1 circuit installed in 40% of spaces

- Commercial buildings excluding office use**:

Level 2 EV charging stations in 6% of spaces

Level 1 circuits in 5% of parking spaces

- Office Buildings:

Level 2 EV charging stations in 10% of spaces

Level 1 circuit in 10% of spaces

30% of spaces at least EV Capable

**alternative compliance path for use of fast DC chargers

Reflecting on the code provisions, Supervisor Pine noted, “By requiring all new buildings to be all-electric, San Mateo County is taking another step to aggressively reduce carbon emissions.”

MOVING TOWARD IMPLEMENTATION

The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors approved the reach code provisions on February 25, 2020. While the goal for the County team was to submit the approved package to the Energy Commission for approval and final implementation immediately, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the schedule and has delayed this process.

The team now hopes to achieve final approval and implementation later in 2020. The County team recognizes that successful implementation requires close coordination between the sustainability and planning departments as well as continued education for stakeholders across the county.

An important area of education for county stakeholders is the role of all-electric new construction and mandatory solar provisions for grid resiliency during potential public safety power shutoffs.



San Mateo County Board of Supervisors

REFERENCES

A range of resources and information is available at https://www.smcsustainability.org/

OTHER FRONTRUNNERS

City of San Rafael Pursues Collaboration in its Development and Adoption of a Flex Path Residential Reach Code City of Cotati City of San Luis Obispo

Archives