

THE FOLLOWING PUBLIC COMMENTS WERE
SUBMITTED FOLLOWING THE PUBLICATION OF
THE AUGUST 9, 2023 SIC MEETING PACKET

From: Diane Bailey [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, August 4, 2023 6:21 PM
To: Sustainability & Infrastructure Commission
Subject: Support for City of San Mateo Sustainable Building Strategy and Electrify San Mateo - Please Move Ahead Expeditiously with this framework

Dear Commissioners, Staff, and Consultants,
Thank you for continuing progress on San Mateo's Building Electrification strategy. This is a key effort to address the Climate Crisis. Your leadership and hardwork are essential not only to maintaining San Mateo's position as a top leader on climate policy, but more importantly to safeguard residents from the impacts of climate that we are already feeling.

We are lucky here on the peninsula, where our summer has been so mild, as millions across the globe swelter in devastating extreme heat. If there's any question about whether we will face more extreme heat here, consider these recent articles:

- Axios reports that: Record-setting heat and hazardous air have already consumed much of the U.S. this summer, and the worst may be yet to come.
- USA Today explains how climate change has contributed to the extreme heat this summer: "...At this point, there aren't any unprecedentedly extreme heat events on Earth that haven't been exacerbated by climate change."
- Vox explains that: "July 4 was the hottest day on Earth since record-keeping began more than 40 years ago..." and extreme heat is likely to worsen due to climate change.

I appreciate that the report by Rincon articulates the many benefits of electrifying San Mateo homes and buildings, including bringing air conditioning (with electric heat pumps) to the many homes that currently lack it. These policies can also help create high quality job opportunities in San Mateo.

My gratitude to everyone who contributed to this report. Please act expeditiously to move electrification forward in San Mateo, as we collectively feel the heat of climate change.

Sincerely,
Diane Bailey

From: Robert Whitehair [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, August 7, 2023 7:16 AM
To: Sustainability & Infrastructure Commission
Cc: Michelle Hudson; Andrea Chow; Christina Horrisberger
Subject: August 9 meeting, agenda item 2, Sustainable Buildings Strategy – Project Update

Dear Chair Rowinski and Commissioners

I thank the City of San Mateo for releasing the decarbonization study, in response to the City Council's approved objective for FY 23-24: **"Establish policies to decarbonize and electrify existing buildings and eliminate natural gas use by 2030."**

Building electrification is one of the most important responses to the climate crisis. The framework provided by the report authors, Rincon Consultants, will provide a clear path for every San Mateo homeowner, landlord, and commercial property owner to take the one most direct, immediate step to stop the march of the climate crisis: Electrify Everything!

It is important to say that Rincon Consultants found that **whole home electrification could be less expensive for building owners in San Mateo than replacing appliances with gas once rebates are included.**

Rincon Consultants found that **"(Electrification) Quotes for some equipment, such as HVAC units, could vary by as much as \$15,000 for the same project."** Moving forward let's work together to standardize installations, to keep a lid on costs.

We are aware that there are strong forces in the United States working to kill the Inflation Reduction Act. Collaborating with others, SMCAT will do everything it can to assure that the IRA continues and thrives.

We respectfully request that the Sustainability and Infrastructure Commission continue the strong City Council Objective to decarbonize and electrify existing buildings.

Thank you

Robert Whitehair
Co Leader, San Mateo Climate Action Team

From: Marty Jordan [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, August 7, 2023 10:44 AM
To: Sustainability & Infrastructure Commission
Subject: draft report

Thank you for your draft report regarding the decarbonization and electrification of existing buildings in San Mateo and the elimination of natural gas use by 2030. There will be much push back on this and I encourage you to remain steadfast in this goal. I don't need to tell you, but it is one of the most effective steps our city can take to stop the climate crisis we find ourselves living each and every day. Please ensure that every citizen has access to the many financial incentives and rebates available to them via county, state and federal programs.

Warm regards,

Marty Jordan
[REDACTED]

From: Megan Strain [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, August 8, 2023 8:04 AM
To: Sustainability & Infrastructure Commission
Subject: Public Comment on Decarbonization Report

Dear San Mateo Sustainability and Infrastructure Commission,

I am a San Mateo resident and member of the San Mateo Climate Action Team. I thank you for sharing the draft report from Rincon regarding San Mateo's decarbonization objective set by City Council -- ""Establish policies to decarbonize and electrify existing buildings and eliminate natural gas use by 2030." I am so grateful to live in a community that is committed to sustainability goals like decarbonization.

I find the draft report encouraging, and I hope it will reignite our city's leadership to continue to take action to electrify buildings. As climate change continues to shape our community, it is critical to take all the steps we can in the next few years to combat climate change, with an eye for equity to ensure *all* citizens are able to make the right decision for their family and for the climate. With the Inflation Reduction Act rebates, many homeowners will find that electrification is less expensive than replacing gas appliances, making decarbonization a "low-hanging fruit" for people wishing to do the right thing for their home and the environment.

Building decarbonization is one of the most direct and immediate steps we can take; and I encourage our city to learn from this report and continue this action while supporting the financial and practical means to ensure all residents can take part.

Thank you,

Megan Strain
San Mateo Resident

From: Elaine Salinger [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, August 8, 2023 10:52 PM
To: Sustainability & Infrastructure Commission
Subject: Electrify San Mateo, Building for the Future: City of San Mateo Sustainable Building Strategy


Hello sustainability and infrastructure commission members,
I am the leader of SMC Citizens Climate Lobby chapter and we have 200+ members living in the City of San Mateo. I represent the chapter members' view. I want to thank the City of San Mateo for releasing the study, in response to the City Council's approved objective for FY 23-24.
Please support **policies to decarbonize and electrify existing buildings and eliminate natural gas use by 2030.**

Building electrification is one of the most important responses to the climate crisis. The framework provided by the report authors, Rincon Consultants, will provide a clear path for every San Mateo homeowner, landlord, and commercial property owner to take the one most direct, immediate step to stop the march of the climate crisis: Electrify Everything!

Between tax refunds and rebates included in the IRA, zero interest loans from PCE, and reduced cost of energy needed to run heat pumps, building electrification is affordable for most people. Please support rapid decarbonization.

Elaine Salinger, San Mateo Chapter Leader



 **Citizens' Climate Lobby**

From: Bruce Naegel [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 11:51 AM
To: Sustainability & Infrastructure Commission
Subject: Upcoming vote on Sustainability

Dear Commissioners:

Thank you for addressing sustainability in San Mateo with your plan to “Establish policies to decarbonize and electrify existing buildings and eliminate natural gas use by 2030.”

Urgency is required in implementing a sustainability plan. We do not have much time. Weather events are increasing in severity. Buildings use large quantities of methane (fossil gas)

San Mateo is taking the responsibility of developing a plan seriously. Rincon Associates, which has developed well received climate plans is guiding the effort.

The goal is clear. We need to use the carbon free electricity supplied by Peninsula Clean Energy to power our buildings.

Fossil (natural) gas was once viewed as a bridge fuel to a carbon free tomorrow. Since that time, we have learned more about fossil gas. First, using as fuel for cooking creates Nitrogen oxides. These oxides are harmful to the lungs of children. In fact, children in homes using natural gas as a cooking fuel had a 42% higher chance of developing asthma symptoms.

42% increase in asthma symptoms

<https://rmi.org/gas-stoves-health-climate-asthma-risk/>

Fossil gas leaks and creates problems. Besides the toxic dangers of methane, leaks can ignite. The worst case of this was the San Bruno explosion in 2010 with 8 killed and 56 injured.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Bruno_pipeline_explosion

Whole Home Electrification

If we are going to get to being gas free by 2030, all gas uses need to be converted to electric appliances. Every year, the selection of electric appliances improves. We have washers, dryers, dishwashers, hot water heaters, Heat Pump HVAC systems. We have artificial flames and fireplaces that provide heat and the magic of a flames in a fireplace (with no burning).

Every year the number of homes that have converted to all electricity grows. San Mateo's efforts will help to accelerate to the goal of zero carbon by 2030. Thanks for the effort to get us to where we are now. Thanks in advance for marching to the 2030 zero carbon goal.

Bruce Naegel
Sustainable Silicon Valley
Carbon Free Mountain View
Carbon Free Silicon Valley
Fossil Free Buildings Silicon Valley

From: Gerard Manning [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 5:40 PM
To: Sustainability & Infrastructure Commission
Subject: Comments on Rincon electrification report

Dear S & I commission members,

Thanks for all you do for San Mateo. Ahead of your review of the Rincon Consultants draft report on building electrification, and based on the draft report, I have a few observations to share.

1. Above all is, this is a critical issue - global warming is clearly the worst threat that humanity has faced in millenia, but also, San Mateo city has emerged as a leader in municipal climate change action, and this report and its implementation has enormous potential to make a big difference throughout California and beyond. I encourage you to put every effort into making this process a success - it may be one of the most important contributions to the planet that you make in your career, and will definitely be more history-changing than almost anything that almost all the rest of us do!
2. I'm very happy to see a clear statement of the importance of equity. To eventually stop burning methane, everyone will need to be on board, so both from a fairness and effectiveness point of view, we need to create solutions that can work for everyone. As much as the effectiveness criteria need to be in line with equity, I hope that the equity criteria will also be in line with effectiveness. I have seen programs in other jurisdictions that carried out very elaborate and very expensive whole-home retrofits on a small number of houses, in a way that was more political than effective, so I hope that any San Mateo programs manage to maximize both effectiveness and equity.
3. The world has a very limited budget of further emissions that can be released. I urge you to focus on maximizing tons of CO2 avoided, over 'complete' solutions. For instance, since water heating accounts for half of all domestic gas usage, water heaters are replaced more than furnaces and cooktops, and the economics of water heater electrification are the most compelling, it would make sense to push immediately (i.e. in months, not years) to increase the rate of water heater electrification on burnout, which is currently estimated at only 1-3%. Every gas water heater that is replaced this year will still be polluting in 15 years time, so moving fast on the lowest hanging fruit is important. It is important to have a comprehensive plan to electrify everything, but not everything can be done at once.
4. A second key issue with domestic water heating is that the BAAQMD will meet in late 2024 to determine if their proposed regulations on water heaters should go into effect in 2027. When these regulations were proposed, many board members expressed concerns about their feasibility - equity, funding, supply chain, vendor education etc. If the regulations go ahead, it will be a colossal achievement - turning off half the domestic gas emissions from an area of 7 million people. If San Mateo city can move quickly on encouraging voluntary electrification of water heaters at scale, it will be an important proof that the rest of the Bay Area can implement these changes. Again, it will allow San Mateo innovation to have a huge effect, far beyond its borders.

Thank you for all the work you do, and I wish you every success in greening San Mateo.

-Gerard Manning.