



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Vice Mayor Pam Foley

SUBJECT: Existing Single-Family
Building Reach Code

DATE: September 5, 2025

Approved

Date 09/05/2025

RECOMMENDATION

1. Do not approve the proposed ordinance as written in the memorandum dated July 21, 2025, amending various sections of Chapters 24.10 and 24.12 of Title 24 of the San José Municipal Code.
2. Continue to offer electrification incentives through San José Clean Energy.

BACKGROUND

I'd like to thank staff for their work on this proposed reach code ordinance. The City of San José's Climate Smart initiative is important, and I support work to reduce our communitywide greenhouse gas emissions. Indeed, electrification and building efficiency standards make sense for new construction. However, I have strong reservations when proposing to apply these standards to existing single-family homes. Good public policymaking is about weighing tradeoffs and while I recognize the importance of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, we should also not lose sight of potential burdens placed on homeowners resulting from this proposed ordinance.

The staff memorandum correctly recognizes that there are incremental costs associated with converting to a heat pump as well as upfront costs for electric readiness. Adoption of the proposed ordinance would impose these costs on homeowners. We must be cautious when contemplating imposing additional costs on our residents. The proposed ordinance essentially amounts to an additional regulatory and cost burden on San Jose residents and homeowners.

The staff memorandum notes that the proposed ordinance would result in about a 0.1% reduction in communitywide greenhouse gas emissions annually compared to 2023 levels. While any reduction in greenhouse gas emissions is a positive, the benefit should be weighed against the burden placed on homeowners. Such a small greenhouse gas emissions reduction does not justify the inevitable financial and quality of life impacts to residents.