

# SAN JOSE CLEAN ENERGY PILOT PROGRAM OPTIONS

City Council

December 12, 2025



Lori Mitchell, Director  
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# BACKGROUND

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- In April 2025, City Council directed staff to return with options for a pilot program encouraging adoption of commercial electric leaf blowers.
- Staff evaluated greenhouse gas reductions, market impact, staffing needs, and cost-effectiveness of:
  1. Contractor Incentive Pilot Program – incentives for contractors completing their first heat pump installations.
  2. Electric Leaf Blower Pilot Program – point-of-sale incentives for small landscaping businesses.
- **Recommendation:** develop contractor incentive pilot program, not an electric leaf blower pilot program

# WHY CONTRACTOR INCENTIVES?

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- Increase number of contractors able to support residents through Bay Area Air District regulations (2027-2031)
- Over 800 San José contractors hold relevant licenses, yet only 72 participate in SJCE's programs
- Contractors influence customer decisions
- Early-stage financial support helps contractors build expertise, reduce installation costs over time, and diversify the market



# WHY NOT ELECTRIC LEAF BLOWERS?

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- Low impact, high cost: leaf blowers cause less than 0.1% of San José emissions. Would require staffing, new systems for verification and dealer coordination, and extensive multilingual education
- Electric leaf blowers are mobile; equipment may not be used in San José
- Performance, charging logistics, and productivity concerns remain barriers for small businesses



# PILOT PROGRAM COMPARISON

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	Expected impact over 12 months	Budget	Staff time estimate	Lifetime greenhouse gas reductions
<b>Contractor incentive</b> <i>Recommended</i>	15 “new” heat pump contractors	\$100,000	0.07 full time equivalent	1,466 metric tons of carbon dioxide
<b>Electric leaf blower incentive</b> <i>Not recommended</i>	75 electric leaf blowers sold	\$142,500*	0.25-0.5 full time equivalent	174 metric tons of carbon dioxide

\*does not include staffing request

# QUESTIONS?

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- Recommendation: Adopt a resolution approving the development of a Contractor Incentive Pilot Program (cost not to exceed \$100,000) to encourage local contractors to install electric heat pumps.
- Staff
  - Lori Mitchell, Director
  - Kate Ziemba, Senior Environmental Program Manager