

Frequently Asked Questions

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What is building electrification?

Electrification means replacing gas powered appliances with electric alternatives — for example:

- Heat pumps for space heating and cooling
- Heat pump water heaters
- Induction cooktops, ovens, ranges
- Heat pump or electric resistance dryers

These upgrades can (and should) be paired with insulation/weatherization to maximize benefits.

Why is the City working on this?

- **Climate Goals:** Buildings powered by renewable electricity emit far fewer greenhouse gases. The City has a target of reaching carbon neutrality by 2045.*
- **Building Comfort:** Electric appliances are more efficient, which means residents can heat and cool their homes to more comfortable temperatures.
- **Health & Safety:** Eliminating combustion indoors cuts pollutants (NO_x, CO, formaldehyde). It also avoids gas leaks, explosions, and fire risks.
- **Economic Benefit:** Though retrofits have upfront costs, energy savings over time often offset them.
- **Equity:** The City aims to ensure low-income and marginalized communities benefit from the comfort, safety, and economic benefits of electrification.

*Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) plans to provide 100% carbon-neutral electricity by 2030, which supports this transition.

What incentives currently exist for electrification?

- SMUD provides rebates for [residential](#) and [commercial](#) electrification and [assistance for income-eligible customers](#).

Because incentive programs evolve, always check current eligibility and stacking options before starting a project.

Will the City require me to retrofit or replace existing gas appliances?

No. The City of Sacramento adopted an Existing Building Electrification strategy as a guiding framework, not a mandate. Future policies may phase in requirements, but the City is not contemplating any requirements that would force people to replace their gas appliances with electric.

What about schools and state-owned buildings?

The City lacks jurisdiction over K–12, community colleges, or other state buildings, which follow the Division of the State Architect (DSA). The DSA released a Decarbonization Roadmap in 2022, and local school districts (e.g., SCUSD) have adopted carbon-neutral guidelines.

How will this affect me as a homeowner or business?

Over time, policies, incentives, and programs will help:

- Replace gas appliances with electric ones
- Expand weatherization and energy efficiency services
- Support solar + battery integration
- Outline funding and financing options

The strategy will act as a roadmap for City, SMUD, and partners to phase in implementation.

How will low-income households be supported?

Equity is a central criterion in the strategy. Programs will prioritize:

- Combining electrification with whole-home repairs
- Incentives or subsidies for cost reductions
- Direct installation options for low-income customers.
- Education and outreach to maximize benefit

The City has partnered with SMUD, Habitat for Humanity, the Sacramento Hispanic Chamber of Commerce to complete some of these projects already. The California Energy Commission's [Equitable Building Decarbonization Program](#) will also provide and install energy-efficient electric appliances, energy efficiency measures, and related upgrades at no cost to low-income households in under-resourced communities.

Will older homes require electrical panel upgrades?

Sometimes. But:

- High-efficiency appliances and circuit-sharing devices increasingly reduce need for full panel upsizing
- Smart load management (e.g. scheduling, smart controllers) can help balance load
- Incentives and rebates may offset panel upgrade costs
- Special attention is required for homes with underground wiring, where panel work is more complex

The goal is to avoid unnecessary upgrades wherever possible.

How will tenant protections and “renovictions” be addressed?

The City's equity framework includes anti-displacement and tenant protection measures. The City's Housing Element includes programs to strengthen tenant rights. The City also has a Tenant Protection Program, which establishes maximum allowed rent increases and provides protection from unwanted lease termination for long term tenants.

Are all-electric homes more vulnerable to power outages?

Not necessarily. Most modern gas appliances still require electricity to operate. Electrified homes can integrate solar + battery storage or vehicle-to-home systems to provide resilience during outages.

Is the grid ready? What is SMUD doing?

- SMUD continually invests in grid upgrades, reliability, and resilience.
- Sacramento's existing high summer electricity demand (due to air conditioning) aligns with future patterns — electrification of heating is not expected to exceed current summer peaks.

- Technologies like smart load shifting for EV chargers and heat pump water heaters help distribute load over time.
- SMUD monitors local feeder capacity and may require minimal local upgrades in constrained areas.

The City will continue to coordinate with SMUD on updates to the electric grid.

How can I learn more or explore retrofit options for my home?

There are many resources available to help residents plan their electric retrofits. SMUD has partnered with XeroHome to provide a tool that helps residents identify cost effective upgrade options for their home. Check out [XeroHome](#) today!

Are there efforts to do building electrification at a neighborhood scale?

California's [Senate Bill 1221](#) directs the California Public Utilities Commission to launch a voluntary program that pilots neighborhood-scale transitions from natural gas to zero-emission energy alternatives, such as electric appliances, in designated priority zones. Up to 30 pilot projects will be implemented with community consent, focusing on areas where gas infrastructure upgrades are already planned to reduce costs and emissions.