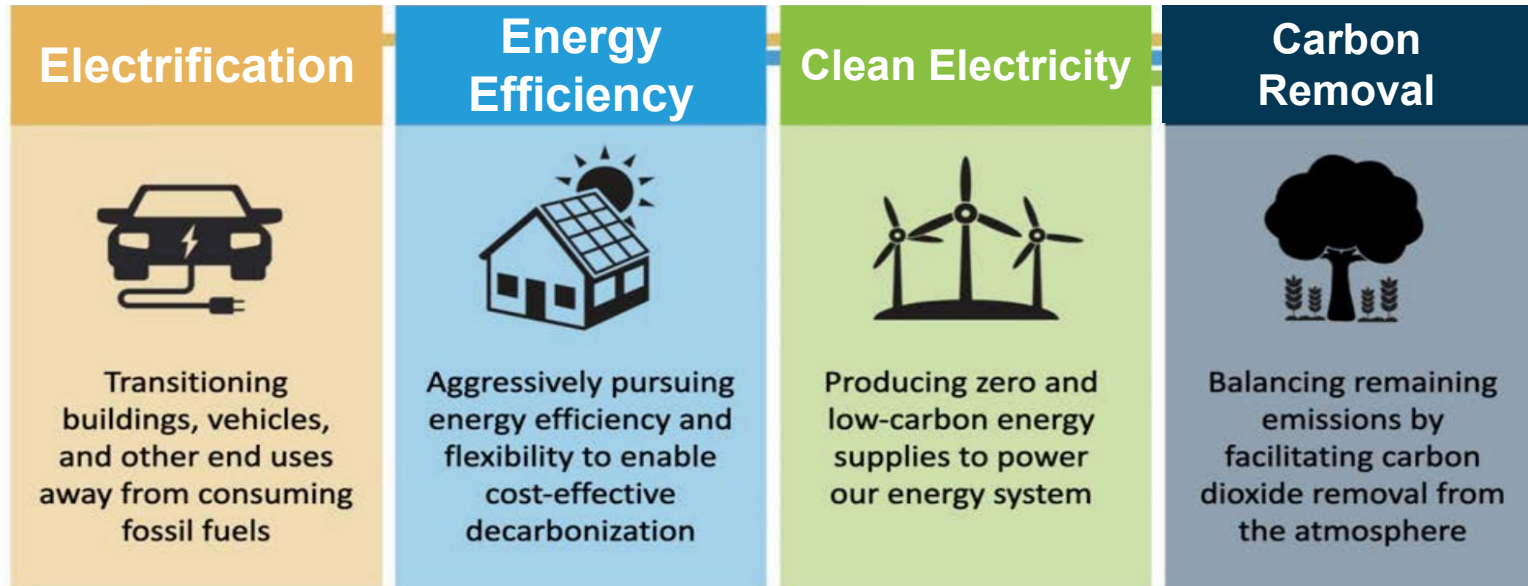


# **Specialized Building Code**

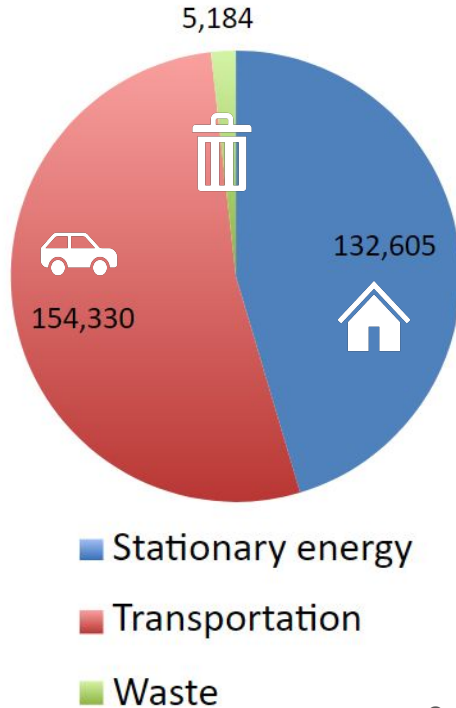
## **Article 37**

# Massachusetts' Climate Plan

- The [2021 Climate Act](#) commits Massachusetts to “net-zero” emissions by 2050
- The 2050 timeline is backed by science to minimize risk of worst-case scenarios
- Getting there by 2050 requires starting now with technologies available today



# Meet Climate Goals and Prepare for the Future of Energy



- Buildings produce 45% of Milton's emissions
- Adopting Specialized Code facilitates the transition to clean energy
- Adopting Specialized Code avoids unnecessary expense to convert these buildings to electric in the future
- New buildings will last 50-100 years. They should be ready for our energy future.

Source: [Milton 2022 GHG Inventory](#)

# We Have Three Building Code Options in MA

Code Options	
Base Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• International Energy Conservation Code 2021 + MA amendments</li></ul>
Stretch Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Milton's Current Building Code - adopted by TM in 2010</li><li>• Updated every 3 years (next update July 2024)</li></ul>
Specialized Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Aligns with state climate goals</li><li>• Will take effect January 2025 if TM approves</li></ul>

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Specialized Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Aligns with state climate goals</li><li>• Will take effect January 2025 if TM approves</li></ul>

# What *Changes* if Milton Adopts the Specialized Code?

1. **Pre-wiring:** new buildings using fossil fuels must pre-wire for future electrification
2. **Solar:** new fossil fuel buildings must install onsite solar to reduce utility costs and offset fossil-fuel emissions (exceptions for shaded sites)
3. **Better Energy Efficiency for Large Homes:** new single-family homes greater than 4,000 square feet must be all-electric OR certified zero Energy (using solar to offset all energy usage)
4. **Better Energy Efficiency for Large Multi-family:** new multi-family homes greater than 12,000 square feet must use Passive House compliance pathways (highly efficient by design).

These requirements **do not** affect additions and renovations of existing homes.

# “Pre-wiring” Means:

Adequate electrical service to the building, designated circuits, and appropriate outlets for:

- **Heating:** high-efficiency air or ground source heat pump for both heating and cooling
- **Hot Water**
- **Cooking:** induction stovetop and electric oven
- **Clothes Drying**
- **Electric Vehicle Charging**

Complementing with solar panels lowers emissions and reduces energy costs for the homeowner.

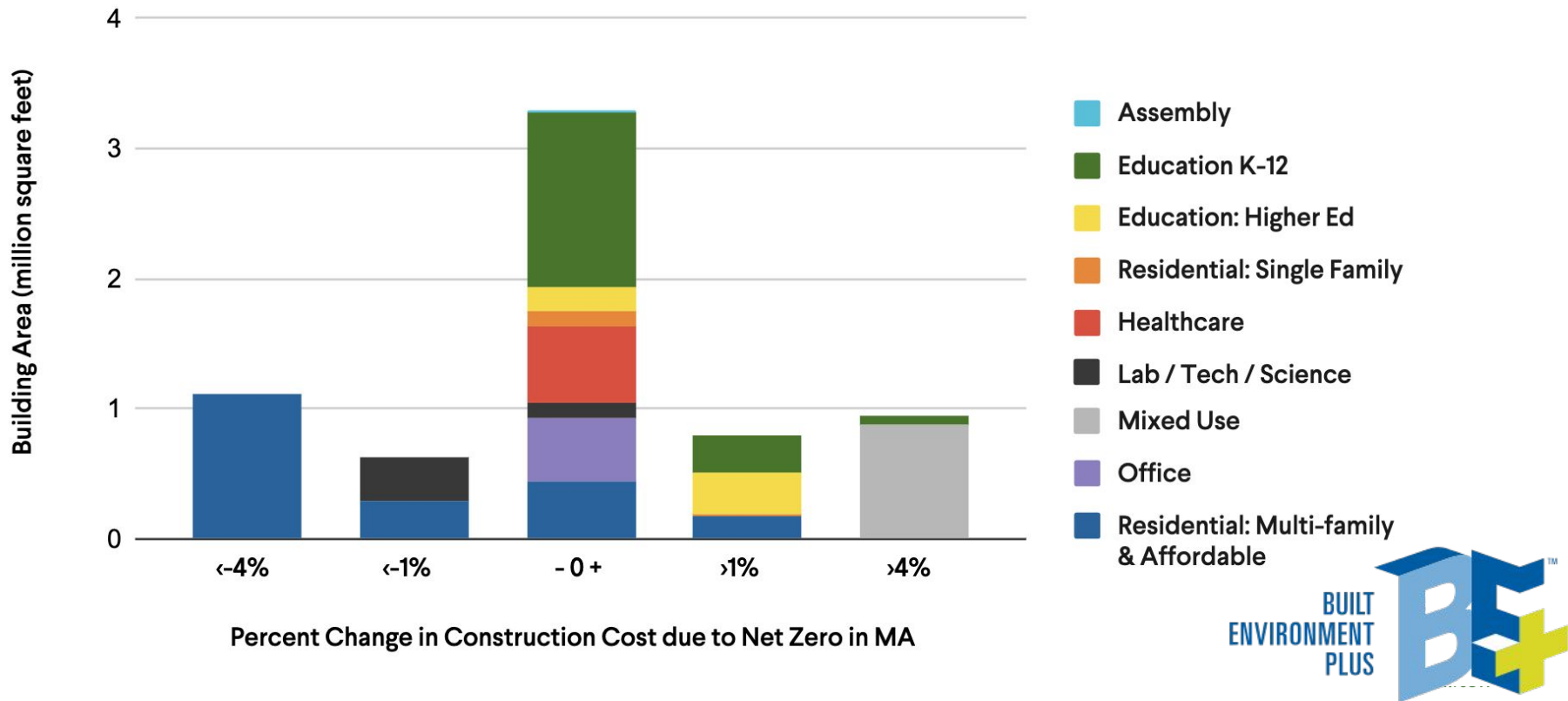
**For most homes, 200 amp service is adequate to serve all the loads.**

# Key Points on the Specialized Code

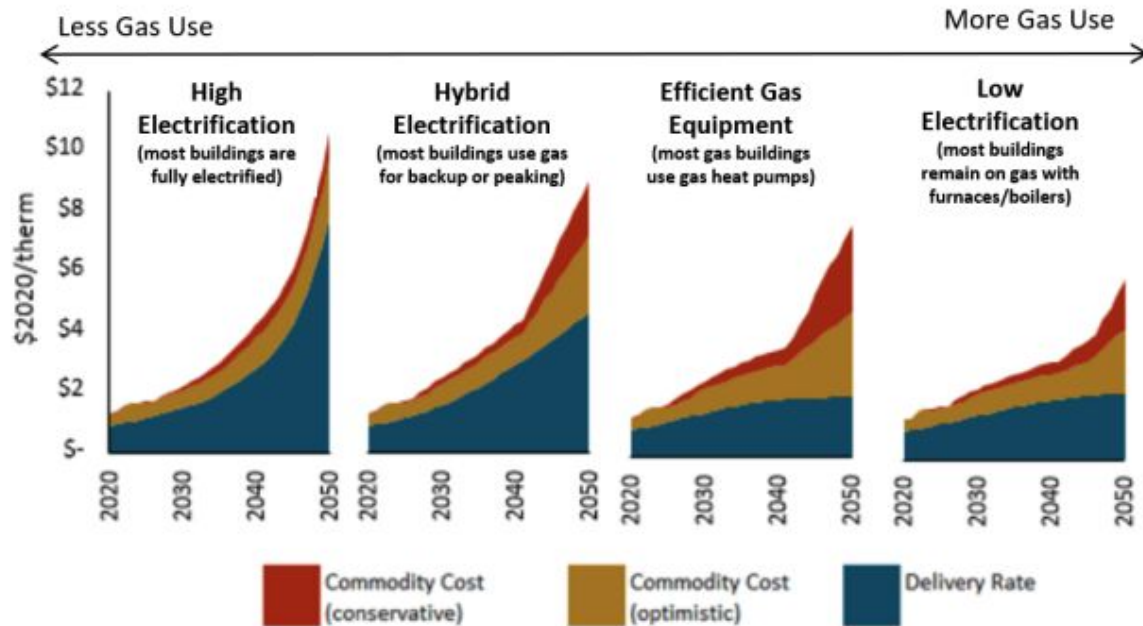
1. Applies **only to new buildings** constructed after January 2025
2. Necessary to **reduce climate impacts**
3. **Preserves flexibility** for present and future energy needs
4. **Protects residents** from costly construction projects to change energy sources
5. Helps Milton **qualify for state grants** to support energy projects



# 81% of Net Zero Ready Buildings Have <1% Construction Cost Premium



# Pre-Wiring Protects Residents from Rising Fossil-Fuel Prices





# Helps Qualify Milton for State Funding for Energy Projects

Specialized Code adoption moves us toward Climate Leader community certification, which will be the largest source of state funds for energy projects



Over \$1  
million in  
state  
grants for  
Milton  
since 2010

- 
1. Be a Green Community in good standing
- 
2. Have a local body that advises the municipality on clean energy/climate initiatives
  3. Commit to eliminate on-site fossil fuel use by 2050 (municipal buildings/operations)
  4. Create a municipal decarbonization roadmap
  5. Adopt a Zero-Emission Vehicle first policy
  6. **Adopt the Specialized Opt-In Building code**



# FAQs

# Will this make housing less affordable?

[A DOER study](#) found all-electric homes under the stretch code would cost less overall to finance and operate than a fossil-fuel home under the base code. Prices fluctuate, but the assumption that costs must go up is flawed. See appendix for details.

# Will all these electric buildings strain the grid?

- Electric Stretch and Specialized Code buildings typically have lower peak heating loads and dramatically lower peak cooling loads than existing buildings and often new gas buildings, due to stronger energy efficiency requirements
- Thus the Specialized Code doesn't increase the load on the grid.
- Eversource has filed plans to increase grid capacity by 180% to support “full electrification.”

# What if the power goes out?

- We are already dependent on electricity, and it is wise to plan for this.
- An “all-electric” building can have a fossil fuel backup generator.

# Can it be changed in the future??

- Yes. All three building code options in Massachusetts are open-ended because building codes are changed regularly to take advantage of innovations in building technology and safety best-practices.
- They are updated every three years through an open, public process engaging many stakeholders including builders, appliance manufacturers, building inspectors, and urban planners.
- Extending to a fossil fuel “ban” is very unlikely. Affordability is a key concern for the commonwealth and motivated the narrow scope of the specialized code.



# How Would the Specialized Code Affect a New School?

- All-electric construction is unlikely to add cost to a new school building
- All-electric construction is likely the cheapest option
- **There is NO REQUIREMENT** to build all-electric with the specialized code
- Energy efficiency requirements are same as stretch code
- Solar requirements are incentivized with rebates and tax credits, and lower operational costs
- Failing to build for future electrification locks the town into far higher future gas costs

**Does this apply to 40Bs and Rezoning under MBTA?**

**Yes**

# Appendix

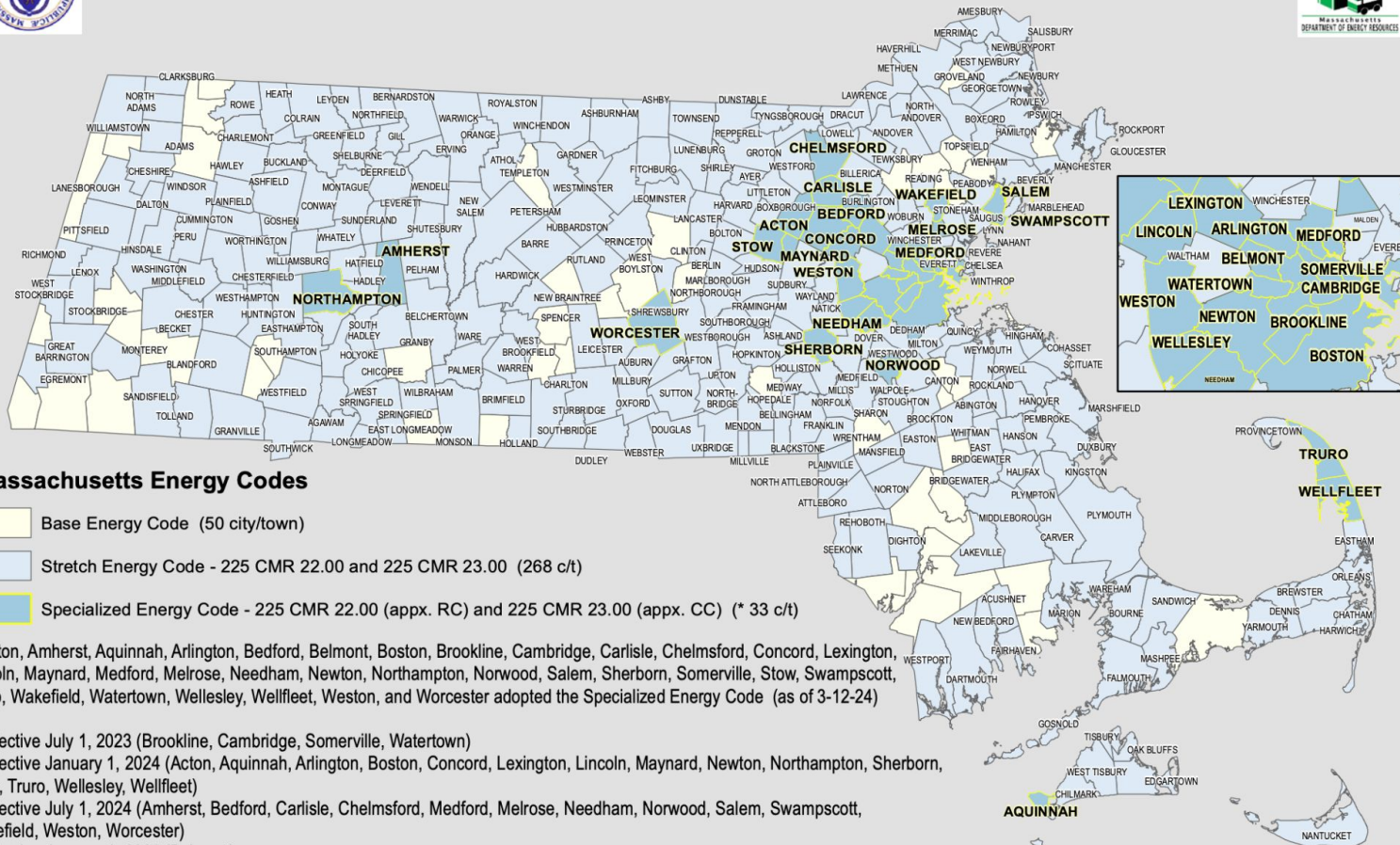
# Compliance Pathways Details

New with Specialized Code

Building Size	Fuel Type	Minimum Efficiency		Electrification	Onsite Solar
		Stretch Code	Specialized Code		
Home under 4000 sq ft 🏠	All Electric ⚡	HERS 45 or Passive House pathways	Same	N/A	Optional
Home under 4000 sq ft 🏠	Mixed Fuel 🔥	HERS 42 or Passive House	Same	Pre-wiring 🔌	Required ☀️ (except shaded sites)
Home more than 4000 sq ft 🏠	All Electric ⚡	HERS 45 or Passive House	Same	N/A	Optional
Home more than 4000 sq ft 🏠	Mixed Fuel 🔥	HERS 42 or Passive House	HERS 0 or Phius ZERO	Pre-wiring 🔌	Required ☀️ (except shaded sites)
Low-rise Multi-family >12k sq ft 🏢	All Electric ⚡	HERS 45 or Passive House	Passive House	N/A	Optional
Low-rise Multi-family >12k sq ft 🏢	Mixed Fuel 🔥	HERS 42 or Passive House	Passive House	Pre-wiring 🔌	Optional
Commercial 🏢	All Electric ⚡	Per Stretch Code	Same	N/A	Optional
Commercial 🏢	Mixed Fuel 🔥	Per Stretch Code	Same	Pre-wiring 🔌	Required ☀️ (except shaded sites)

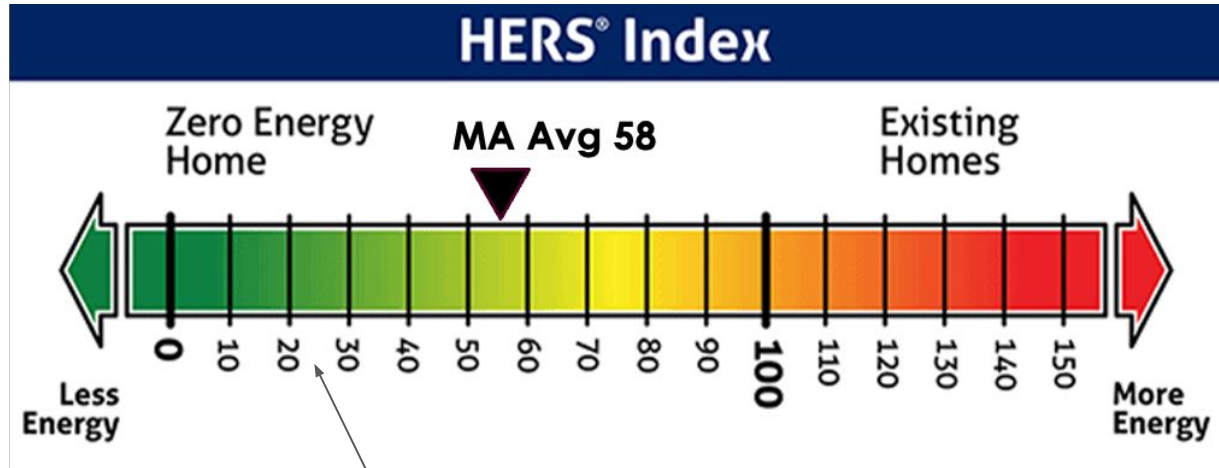


# Massachusetts Building Energy Code Adoption by Municipality



# The HERS Index Rates a Building's Energy Efficiency

Nationally-recognized standard to measure a home's energy efficiency using variables like walls, insulation, ceiling/roof/window/doors, and HVAC systems. Based on an audit conducted by a certified HERS rater.



HERS 0: The home produces as much energy as it consumes

“Passive House”:  
Roughly HERS ~20

HERS 100: The energy efficiency of a typical home in 2006.

Kate Crosby

Energy Manager, Acton-Boxborough Regional School District



The cheapest new building to build today is all-electric geothermal, because of [Inflation Reduction Act tax credits](#) (via **direct pay** to non-profits like local govt) and **generous MassSave incentives**.

An all-electric geothermal building is also the cheapest to operate - this has been true right along, due to the high efficiency, low energy footprint, and low maintenance costs.

In 2019 when our [Acton] School Building Committee selected the all-electric geothermal option, it was more expensive to build but that was offset by the "cheapest to operate" -- it was equivalent to a high-efficiency gas building over time.

**Today, an all-electric geothermal school building is both cheapest to build and also cheapest to operate.**



**Towns recently building all-electric schools:** Acton, Amherst, Ashland, Belmont, Boston, Brookline, Cambridge, Concord, Hudson, Medfield, New Bedford, Lexington, Quincy, Westwood, Watertown, Newton, Salem, Stoneham, Swampscott, Wellesley, Westborough

# Summary of updated Stretch and Municipal Opt-in Specialized Codes for New Low-rise Residential Buildings

Building Size	Fuel Type	Minimum Efficiency Pathway		Heat/Energy Recovery Ventilation	Electrification	Renewable Energy Generation
		Stretch Code	Specialized Opt-in Code	Stretch Code	Specialized Opt-in Code addition	Specialized Opt-in Code addition
Dwelling units up to 4,000 sf	All-electric	HERS 45 or Passive House pathways	same	required for HERS		
Dwelling units up to 4,000 sf	Mixed-fuels	HERS 42 or Passive House pathways	same	required for HERS	Pre-wiring required	Solar PV: $\geq 4$ kW for single family and $\geq 0.75$ W/sf for multi-family (except shaded sites and Passive House buildings)
Dwelling units >4,000 sf	All-electric	HERS 45 or Passive House pathways	same	required for HERS		
Dwelling units >4,000 sf	Mixed-fuels	HERS 42 or Passive House pathways	HERS 0	required for HERS	Pre-wiring required	No additional requirement: Solar PV or other renewables are required to meet HERS 0
Multi-family >12,000 sf AND $\leq 3$ stories	All Electric	HERS 45 or Passive House pathways	Passive House pathways	required for HERS		
Multi-family >12,000 sf AND $\leq 3$ stories	Mixed-fuels	HERS 42 or Passive House pathways	Passive House pathways	required for HERS	Pre-wiring required	

Updated Stretch Code requires all dwellings to have at least one parking space wired for EV charging



## Summary of updated Stretch and Municipal Opt-in Specialized Codes for New Commercial Buildings

Building Type	Fuel Type	Minimum Efficiency Pathway		Electrification		Minimum EV Wiring (% of parking spaces)	Renewable Energy Generation
		Stretch Code	Specialized Opt-in Code	Stretch Code	Specialized Opt-in Code addition	Stretch Code	Specialized Opt-in Code addition
Offices and Schools >20,000 sf	All Electric	Thermal Energy Demand Intensity (TEDI) or Passive House pathways	same			20% for offices	
Offices and Schools >20,000 sf	Mixed-fuels	TEDI or Passive House pathways	same	Full heating with curtainwall env	Pre-wiring required	20% for offices	On-site solar PV: Minimum of 1.5W/sf for each sq foot of the 3 largest floors or 75% of Potential Solar Zone Area and all AC must be minimum efficiency heat pump (except Passive House buildings).
High Ventilation (Hospitals, Labs, etc.)	All Electric	TEDI, 10% better than 2019 ASHRAE Appendix G, or Passive House pathways	same			20% for labs	
High Ventilation (Hospitals, Labs, etc.)	Mixed-fuels	TEDI, 10% better than 2019 ASHRAE Appendix G, or Passive House pathways	same	Partial heating, full with curtainwall env	Pre-wiring required	20% for labs	On-site solar PV: Minimum of 1.5W/sf for each sq foot of the 3 largest floors or 75% of Potential Solar Zone Area and all AC must be minimum efficiency heat pump (except Passive House buildings).
Multi-family >12,000 sf AND > 3 stories	All Electric	TEDI, HERS 45, Passive House pathways, or (until July 1, 2024) 10% better than ASHRAE Appendix G	Passive House pathways			20%	
Multi-family >12,000 sf AND > 3 stories	Mixed-fuels	TEDI, HERS 42, Passive House pathways, or (until July 1, 2024) 10% better than ASHRAE Appendix G	Passive House pathways	Full heating with curtainwall env	Pre-wiring required	20%	
Small Commercial (<20,000 sf, except multi-family)	All Electric	Prescriptive pathway plus Stretch Code amendments	same			20%	
Small Commercial (<20,000 sf, except multi-family)	Mixed-fuels	Prescriptive pathway plus Stretch Code amendments	same	Full heating with curtainwall env	Pre-wiring required	20%	On-site solar PV: Minimum of 1.5W/sf for each sq foot of the 3 largest floors or 75% of Potential Solar Zone Area and all AC must be minimum efficiency heat pump.

# Cost of Net Zero Buildings in MA

Key Findings from [2019 report](#) and [2023 reports](#) on MA Net Zero and Net Zero Ready buildings:

- In Massachusetts, there's over **32 million square feet** of Net Zero Ready buildings and that number is growing exponentially.
- Of the 7 million GSF with reported cost data, **81% reported <1% construction cost premium** to achieve Net Zero Ready.
- When there is an upfront cost premium for new buildings, it ranges from 0-7%, and the **payback is 8 years**. (Aside: retrofits payback in 6 years).
- When construction is financed via loans or bonds, operating cost savings more than offsets the loan payment premiums. **This results in positive cash-flow from day one.**
- Building **energy demand can be reduced 44 – 54 percent** across all building types with technology that's readily available today.
- In summary, the upfront cost premium is usually <1%, and when it exists, the payback is strong because of the significant operating cost savings.



# Timeline of Building Code Evolution

## 2008 Green Communities Act

- Base Energy Code: “To adopt and fully integrate the latest International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) and any more stringent amendments thereto as part of the state building code, in consultation with DOER.”
- Created DOER Green Communities Program and Stretch energy code: “minimize, to the extent feasible, the lifecycle cost of the facility by utilizing energy efficiency, water conservation and other renewable or alternative energy technologies.”
- Milton becomes a Green Community in 2010 and adopts Stretch Energy Code



## 2021 Climate Act

- 50% emission reduction by 2030
- DOER to update the Stretch Code from time to time
- DOER to develop a municipal opt-in specialized stretch energy code that includes:
  - net-zero building performance standards
  - a definition of net-zero building
  - designed to achieve MA GHG emission limits and sub-limits



## Statutory Timeline

- July 2022: EEA must establish specific 2025 and 2030 emissions reduction targets for the buildings sector
- December 2022: DOER must promulgate new specialized opt-in code
- January 2023: New Base Energy Code goes into effect
- 2030: Massachusetts must achieve at least 50% reduction in GHG emissions
- May 2024: Milton Town Meeting votes on adopting Specialized Code
- January 2025: If adopted, Specialized Code goes into effect

# Specialized Code Low-rise Residential Compliance

1. Zero Energy: Net zero energy consumption over the course of a year via high efficiency and on-site renewables. HERS 0 or Phius ZERO efficiency
2. All-Electric: No on-site combustion of fossil fuels. HERS 45 or Phius CORE efficiency
3. Mixed-Fuel: Pre-wiring to allow for all-electric retrofits, on-site renewable. HERS 42 or Phius CORE or PHI efficiency

Applies to single family buildings and multifamily buildings 3 stories or less.

Homes less than 4,000sf may use all three pathways. Homes 4,000sf and greater must be either Zero Energy or All-Electric. If fossil fuel combustion is present, must meet Zero Energy requirements

## Definition of Net-zero Building

“A building which is consistent with achievement of MA 2050 net zero emissions, through a combination of highly energy efficient design together with being an all-electric or Zero Energy Building, or where fossil fuels are utilized, a building fully pre-wired for future electrification and that generates solar power on-site from the available Potential Solar Zone Area”

# Large Multi-Family & Commercial Compliance

- For Multi-Family housing 4+ stories & 12,000sf or larger, Passive House standards (Phius CORE or PHI) are required for both All-Electric and Mixed-Fuel construction
- For Commercial properties, expands requirements for on-site solar energy and wiring for electrification if Mixed-Fuel

Building Type	Fuel Type	Stretch code	Specialized Code
Schools, Offices, Municipal buildings	All Electric	TEDI or Passivehouse	
	Mixed Fuel	TEDI or Passivehouse	<b>TEDI + Solar PV</b> or Passivehouse <b>+ wiring for electrification</b>
Other Commercial (over 20,000 sf)	All Electric	ASHRAE or TEDI or Passivehouse	
	Mixed Fuel	ASHRAE or TEDI or Passivehouse	<b>ASHRAE + Solar</b> or <b>TEDI + Solar</b> or Passivehouse <b>+ wiring for electrification</b>

# Cost-effectiveness of All-Electric Buildings

Available cost studies from DOER compare the Stretch Code (Milton's current code) to Base Code after July 2024 updates take effect. This IS NOT a cost estimate of Specialized Code adoption, which should have smaller construction cost impacts. They are included to illustrate the cost-effectiveness of all-electric, energy-efficient buildings.

- Under the Stretch Code (at HERS 42), both gas and electric heat are cost-competitive to build and own compared to the Base Code.
- MassSave incentives and rebates, Federal tax credits, and MA state programs have been designed to financially support these new codes
- A Department of Energy Resources (DOER) study found that after incentives home the homeowner would save \$20,000 constructing a 2500 square foot home to Stretch Code versus Base Code.
- Low-rise residential buildings built with all electric heating and cooling (via heat pumps) will typically cost less to build than those built with fossil fuel heating. One reason for this is that heat pumps can be used for both heating and central air conditioning, whereas fossil fuel heated new homes typically require a separate air conditioning system.





**HERS Index (ERI)**

**52**

Base

**42**

Stretch



Electric  
Heat Pump

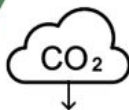
2030 Annual Greenhouse  
Gas

**0.75**

Stretch Tons

**2.56**

Tons Saved



## Home Details

- 2,100 sq.ft.
- Small Single Family
- 3 Bedrooms

MA 10th Edition Building Code | 2023

# Small Single Family - Electric

## Costs and Benefits to Meet Stretch Code

	COSTS		BENEFITS	NET
BUILDER	<b>-\$11,597</b> Total Adjustments		<b>\$17,000</b> Rebates & Tax Rebates <sup>1</sup>	<b>-\$28,597</b> Cost Compared to Base Code
HOME BUYER	<b>-\$5,719</b> Change to Downpayment <sup>3</sup>	<b>-\$1,244</b> Change to Annual Mortgage Payment <sup>3</sup>	<b>-\$191</b> Estimated Energy Cost Savings per Year <sup>2</sup>	<b>-\$1,053</b> Buyer Annual Net

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/residential-stretch-code-costs-and-benefits-case-studies/download>



**HERS Index**

**52**

Base

**42**

Stretch



Gas

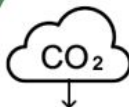
2030 Annual Greenhouse  
Gas

**2.92**

Stretch Tons

**0.38**

Tons Saved



## Home Details

- 2,100 sq.ft.
- Small Single Family
- 3 Bedrooms

MA 10th Edition Building Code | 2023

# Small Single Family - Gas

## Costs and Benefits to Meet Stretch Code

	COSTS		BENEFITS	NET
BUILDER	<b>\$14,064</b> Total Adjustments		<b>\$6,157</b> Rebates & Tax Credits <sup>1</sup>	<b>\$7,907</b> Cost Compared to Base Code
HOME BUYER	<b>\$1,581</b> Change to Downpayment <sup>3</sup>	<b>\$344</b> Change to Annual Mortgage Payment <sup>3</sup>	<b>-\$153</b> Estimated Energy Cost Savings per Year <sup>2</sup>	<b>\$496</b> Buyer Annual Net

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/residential-stretch-code-costs-and-benefits-case-studies/download>





**HERS Index**

**52**

Base

**42**

Stretch



Gas

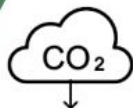
2030 Annual Greenhouse  
Gas

**4.13**

Stretch Tons

**1.49**

Tons Saved



## Home Details

- 4000 sq.ft.
- Large Single Family
- 5 Bedrooms

MA 10th Edition Building Code | 2023

# Large Single Family - Gas

## Costs and Benefits to Meet Stretch Code

	COSTS	BENEFITS	NET
BUILDER	<b>\$10,892</b> Total Adjustments	<b>\$7,708</b> Rebates & Tax Rebates <sup>1</sup>	<b>\$3,184</b> Cost Compared to Base Code
HOME BUYER	<b>\$637</b> Change to Downpayment <sup>3</sup>	<b>\$139</b> Change to Annual Mortgage Payment <sup>3</sup>	<b>\$440</b> Estimated Energy Cost Savings per Year <sup>2</sup>
			<b>-\$302</b> Buyer Annual Net

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/residential-stretch-code-costs-and-benefits-case-studies/download>



**HERS Index**

**52**

Base

**42**

Stretch



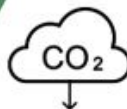
2030 Annual Greenhouse  
Gas

**1.19**

Stretch Tons

**4.43**

Tons Saved



## Home Details

- 4000 sq.ft.
- Large Single Family
- 5 Bedrooms

MA 10th Edition Building Code | 2023

# Large Single Family - Electric

## Costs and Benefits to Meet Stretch Code

	COSTS	BENEFITS	NET
BUILDER	<b>-\$3,062</b> Total Adjustments	<b>\$17,000</b> Rebates & Tax Rebates <sup>1</sup>	<b>-\$20,062</b> Cost Compared to Base Code
HOME BUYER	<b>-\$4,013</b> Change to Downpayment <sup>3</sup>	<b>-\$873</b> Change to Annual Mortgage Payment <sup>3</sup>	<b>-\$325</b> Estimated Energy Cost Savings per Year <sup>2</sup>
			<b>-\$548</b> Buyer Annual Net

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/residential-stretch-code-costs-and-benefits-case-studies/download>

# Grid Readiness: Per Ian Finlayson, DOER

Stretch/Specialized Code buildings typically have lower peak heating loads and dramatically lower peak cooling loads than existing buildings and often new code gas buildings. Driven by strong envelopes + efficient tech.

Thus the Specialized Code doesn't increase the load on the grid. (Note: ISO-NE peaks in summer)

The reasons for this are:

- **No change to panel:** These new homes already needed to size their electricity supply for whole home A/C so are typically already on a 200 amp panel
  - Now we are looking for them to replace the A/C plus furnace with a Heat pump but with lower heating and cooling hours and -so has a lower peak electric rating needed – so no net increase in amperage.
- **EVs drive main grid growth:** The main increase in electrical peak demand is the EV ready requirement at 50amps for a single-family home – however, this is not a Specialized code requirement – this is the same in the base code and stretch code.
- **Strategies for EVs exist:** Also, adding a 50amp charger is not the same as adding 50amps to the peak load on the home. The builder can use a couple of strategies to keep the EV charger on the same circuit as a dryer for example – with a switch that prevents both being used at the same time, or better still using a 'smart electric panel' such as those offered by SPAN and Schneider electric – that manage the internal load of the home.

[Climate Action Planning](#)[Community Electricity Aggregation](#)[Green Communities](#)[Energy Conservation Initiatives](#)[Stretch Energy Codes](#)[Milton Community Microgrid Study](#)[Recycling & Composting](#)[Environmental Justice](#)[Municipal Vulnerability  
Preparedness](#)[Home](#) | [Community](#) | [Resilience and Sustainability](#) | [Stretch Energy Codes](#)

## STRETCH ENERGY CODE

As part of the Green Communities Act of 2008, Massachusetts adopted a new version of the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC).

In 2009, Massachusetts became the first state to adopt a code that emphasizes energy performance, as opposed to prescriptive code that built to the "base" energy code. The Stretch Code is a performance-based code that allows for more flexibility in how energy efficiency is achieved.

Milton adopted the Stretch Energy Code in 2011 when it updated its building code application to include major additions and renovations. The code applies only to new construction. On January 23, 2021, the town adopted the Specialized Code in Milton.

[Code Application for Different Building Types](#)

### About

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[Green Energy Consumers Alliance](#)  
[Milton CEA Website](#)  
[2024 CEA Renewal Presentation](#)[Milton Community Electricity  
Aggregation Program with Q & A  
session : June 29th, 2021](#)[Opt Out of Program](#)  
[Program Overview \(PDF\)](#)  
[Town of Milton Municipal  
Aggregation Plan \(PDF\)](#)

### Milton Access TV

### New Resident Information

### Permits & Licenses

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### Resilience and Sustainability

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