

# Climate Leader Communities

1. New DOER program for Green Communities.
2. Required to access funding for:
  - studying, designing, constructing and implementing energy efficiency measures and projects;
  - procuring energy management services;
  - adopting energy efficiency policies; and,
  - siting activities related to and construction of renewable energy generating facilities with battery storage on municipally owned property.

# Requirements to be a Climate Leader Community

1. Be a Green Community.
2. Have a Sustainability Committee.
3. Commit to eliminate on-site fossil fuel use by 2050 (municipal buildings/operations).
4. Create a municipal decarbonization roadmap.
  - DOER will offer technical assistance
5. Adopt a Zero-Emission Vehicle first policy.
6. Adopt the Specialized Opt-In building code.

# Passive House



# Specialized vs Stretch code - Residential Low-Rise

Energy Source(s)	Home Size	Stretch code (July 2024)	Specialized Code
All Electric New Homes	Any Size home	HERS 45 or Passivehouse	
Mixed-Fuel New Homes	Under 4,000 sq ft	HERS 42	+Solar PV (min 4kw) + wiring for electrification
	4,000 sq ft and over	HERS 42	+ Solar PV (to net-zero) + wiring for electrification
	Any	Passivehouse option	+ wiring for electrification
Home additions & alterations	Any	Same as Stretch code	

# Specialized vs Stretch code – what’s different?

## Commercial Buildings:

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Building Type	Fuel Type	Stretch code (July 2024)	Specialized Code
Schools, Offices, Municipal buildings	All Electric	Thermal Energy Demand Intensity (TEDI) or Passive house	
	Mixed Fuel	TEDI or Passive house	<b>TEDI + Solar PV or Passive house + wiring for electrification</b>
Other Commercial (over 20,000 sf)	All Electric	ASHRAE or TEDI or Passive house	
	Mixed Fuel	ASHRAE or TEDI or Passive house	<b>ASHRAE + Solar or TEDI + Solar or Passive house + wiring for electrification</b>



# Solar PV in Specialized code

- Required:
  - Using Fossil fuels
  - Using Net Zero path
- Optional:
  - All-electric building
- Exceptions for shaded sites can reduce min. size



# Increased Incentives for builders & developers

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- All-electric homes are generally cheaper to build  
Heat Pump(s) replaces both Central A/C + Furnace(s)
- Mass Save: 1-4 unit all-electric homes  
\$15,000 for HERS 45 single-family  
\$25,000 for HERS 35 / Passive House single-family
- Mass Save: multi-family Passivehouse  
\$3,000 per unit plus design study funding
- Federal IRA:  
\$2,500 or \$5,000/home from 45L tax credit: (aligned with HERS)  
up to \$6/sqft from 179D tax credit for commercial & multi-family

<https://www.masssave.com/saving/residential-rebates/all-electric-home>

<https://www.masssave.com/saving/residential-rebates/passive-house-incentives>

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### 1 Does the Opt-In Specialized Code apply to existing structures?

**No.** Improvements to existing structures, depending on size, are regulated by the Updated Stretch Code and Base Code.

### 2 Will the Opt-In-Specialized Code discourage the creation of affordable housing?

**No.** Incentives will continue to encourage affordable housing while the Opt-In Specialized Code delivers benefits for residents.

### 3 Is it possible to install a gas cooktop?

**Yes.** This is permitted under the Mixed Fuel pathways.

### 4 Why adopt the Opt-In Specialized Code?

**The #1 reason is that it requires pre-wiring**, avoiding costly retrofits down the road and expediting electrification.

### 5 Why does the Opt-In Specialized Code permit fossil fuels?

**It preserves market choice** at a time when utility pricing is highly volatile and utility costs vary 300% among MA communities. “Net zero” definitions vary widely.