



# Gassed Out — How Building Electrification Now Means a Healthy, Prosperous Menlo Park

Menlo Park has a once in a lifetime opportunity to chart its path to all-electric buildings, an outcome that will ensure residents are healthier, our community is more resilient in the face of climate change and wildfire power disruptions and residents save money.

## *Electrification improves health and safety.*

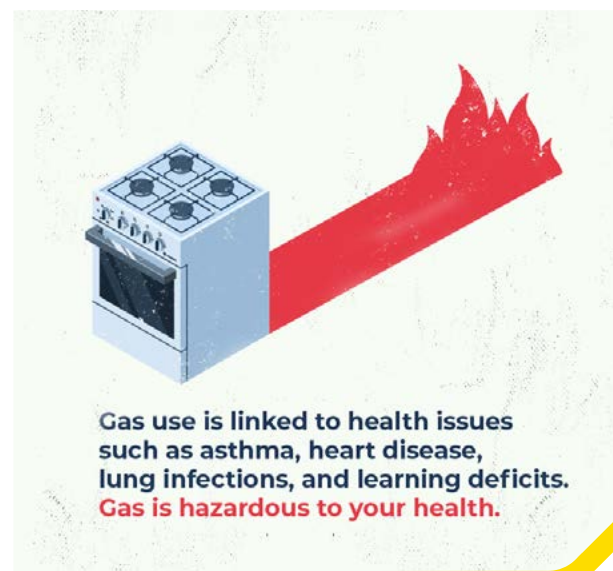
- Methane is the primary ingredient of natural gas. It is a potent climate pollutant contributing almost 40 percent of the carbon pollution in Menlo Park.
- Burning methane creates an array of pollutants including carcinogens like formaldehyde that can lead to increased asthma and respiratory disease as well as cognitive impacts, and children in homes with gas stoves are 42 percent more likely to develop asthma than those with electric stoves.

## *Electrification can cut costs.*

- Utility bills for efficient all-electric homes can be up to \$800 per year less than for comparable homes that use fossil fuels.
- Households of color and low-income families are more likely to live in older, inefficient homes that create a much higher energy burden.
- Compared to a traditional gas furnace & air conditioner, an electric HVAC replacement provides both heating and cooling in the same device, saving \$3,000.

## *Electrification makes Menlo Park a safer, more resilient community.*

- All-electric homes eliminate the risk of pressurized and combustible fuel pipes and are much safer.



- ▶ Modern gas appliances do not work in case of a power outage, and when utility service is shut off due to earthquakes or wildfires, gas service takes much longer to restore.
- ▶ In Menlo Park, the upkeep of natural gas pipelines will take out hundreds of trees to prevent leaks and fires, many of them large heritage trees that cannot be easily replaced.
- ▶ Households that install new electric heat pump heaters automatically get cooling as well. This is an important benefit, since the number of extreme heat days in Menlo Park is expected to rise 30 percent between now and 2030.

## *The pathway to affordable & equitable electrification in Menlo Park is this:*

- ▶ With an investment of \$3 million per year, which could come from the Utility User Tax (UUT), the 1400 low-income households in Menlo Park could receive assistance to fully electrify over the next 10 years. Note that the UUT would raise an additional \$3 million per year if the city proceeds with the full voter-approved levels, which all but low-income customers contribute to.
- ▶ Moderate-income households will have access to extremely easy and affordable financing for electric heating and appliances, through a new program called “On-Bill Financing” that Peninsula Clean Energy (PCE) is expected to launch this year, providing zero interest loans incorporated in utility bills. Combined with existing rebates, this affordable program will avoid upfront costs of electrification and keep utility bills low.
- ▶ More affluent households can access the generous rebates that together with market rate financing—as well as home solar systems—make electrification a money saver over time.

## *The City of Menlo Park can help our community make the switch right now:*

- ▶ Adopt a Reach Code 2.0 measure requiring all projects seeking building permits to use only electric heating and appliances and requiring all air conditioner installations to include heating capability in addition to cooling. This should be adopted in 2022 alongside the tri-annual building code update, and set to take effect in January 2023.
- ▶ In addition, the City of Menlo Park could assist home- and building-owners making the switch through the following:
  - Provide streamlined permitting, that cuts costs and includes support materials about available incentives, contractors, and technical resources for electric appliances.
  - Collaborate with Peninsula Clean Energy to provide discount direct-install services for emergency water heater and heater replacements, focusing on low-income households initially, with the potential for a community-wide program.
  - Invest recovery funds in electric cooling for low-income households that currently lack air conditioning.
  - Ensure that free 24/7 technical support is available to assist residents on electrification.
  - Partner with local nonprofits to do community engagement on the benefits of replacing gas.

**The opportunity is now. Our community will benefit greatly from the switch to all-electric buildings. We have a clear pathway to a clean, healthy, prosperous community with this transition.**