

THE STRETCH CODE

An Important Opportunity to make Marlborough a “Green Community”

Marlborough will have a chance to do the right thing and make money doing it if we adopt the Stretch Energy Code. We save money for homeowners and businesses, create a more stable future for Marlborough, help the environment, and win substantial grant money.

It involves a modest, economical increase in energy efficiency requirements in Marlborough’s existing building code on new construction.

It does not - require retrofitting existing buildings, affect the sale of existing homes, expand the scope of the building code and changes in renovation.

The Stretch Energy Code is an upgrade to the state building code, which is an option for municipalities as part of the landmark Green Communities legislation passed in 2008. If a city chooses to adopt the Stretch Energy Code, then new construction needs to show a moderate increase in energy efficiency compared to the statewide “base code.” New homes will be given an energy efficiency score (called a “HERS rating”) based on testing the new building for air leaks and other key features—like a “miles per gallon” rating for a house. For the first time, a homebuyer will be able to reliably understand the utility costs of a new home before purchasing it.

The modest cost for new-home compliance with Stretch Energy Code standards will be repaid by the savings through reduced energy bills. The initial investment is paid back within a few years—and the significant savings add up year after year over the lifetime of the building, putting cash in the homeowner’s pocket the very first year. The initial investment can be offset through utility rebates and tax credits, making it a great deal.

New commercial buildings will achieve similar moderate increases in energy efficiency, netting savings for business owners.

Over time, the net effects for Marlborough would be substantial. We will decrease energy costs for homeowners and businesses, upgrade our town’s housing stock and make Marlborough more stable and attractive, and provide increased security in the face of potential big swings in energy prices. We will decrease the amount of fossil fuel we burn as a town, thereby decreasing our environmental footprint.

Energy efficiency gains are smart for our regional economy as well. We’ll keep more of our local dollars instead of sending money overseas to buy imported fuel.

Last but not least, adopting the Stretch Energy Code gives us access to state grant money. Marlborough is close to meeting the five criteria for state designation as a “Green Community” and adopting the Stretch Energy Code virtually ensures our success in this designation. As a result, our city will become eligible for \$10million in state grant money to be divided among qualifying Green Community municipalities. Moving quickly toward this goal will increase the amount of grant money

we can expect to receive. This money is to be spent on energy efficiency and renewable energy measures in our community.

For additional information, check out the “Stretch Energy Code Information” link at Mass.gov/doer’s website - click on this link: **[Green Communities Grant Program](#)**.

(Source: Adapted with permission from K.Crosby in Acton by Jen Boudrie for Marlborough)

MORE GOOD INFO:

Useful online info from John Mosher in Hopkinton: Click on some of the links on the bottom of the page, http://johnmosher.net/Sustainable_Business.html, specifically the ones on costs.