



## CITY OF ITHACA

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### **City of Ithaca Adopts Energy Code Supplement, Requires Net-Zero Construction by 2026**

Ithaca, NY - At the May 5 meeting of Common Council, the City of Ithaca adopted the Ithaca Energy Code Supplement (IECS), code requirements for new buildings and major renovations that will substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions while emphasizing affordability. Ithaca Mayor Svante Myrick called Wednesday's unanimous vote "history-making," and lauded the "enormous and impressive accomplishment."

The new law marks the end of a long process guided by an extraordinary level of community input. Over the last four years, City staff worked with a consultant team and internal and external stakeholder groups to create regulations that are achievable, affordable, and impactful. The project was a joint venture with the Town of Ithaca, which plans to discuss adoption of the IECS in early June. Nick Goldsmith, IECS project manager and Sustainability Coordinator for both the City and the Town, said, "Collaboration was an integral part of this project. The regulations will cover both the City and the Town, practically doubling the impact, and providing consistency for builders who work across municipal boundaries. We hope to inspire other communities to take strong legislative action to reduce GHG emissions."

The rules, which will go into effect on August 4, 2021, require that all new buildings be constructed to produce 40% fewer greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions than those built to NYS code. The IECS will become more stringent in 2023, requiring an 80% reduction in emissions. Starting in 2026, net-zero buildings that do not use fossil fuels will be required (with exceptions for cooking and process energy). Partly due to broad community support and the increasing urgency of global climate change, Common Council voted to accelerate the implementation timeline from the originally proposed step-up dates of 2025 and 2030.

The IECS offers the flexibility for builders to comply using the prescriptive Easy Path, which is a customized point-based system, or using the performance-based Whole Building Path. Using the Easy Path, GHG reductions are achieved from electrification of space and water heating (e.g., heat pumps), renewable energy (e.g., community solar), and affordability improvements which reduce construction costs (e.g., efficient building shape).

"The emphasis on social justice and affordability will result in affordable buildings with lower energy costs that are passed on to tenants. The buildings will be more durable, have lower maintenance costs, will last longer, and have eliminated risk of gas explosions and carbon monoxide poisoning," asserts Ian Shapiro from Taitem Engineering, a member of the consultant team led by STREAM Collaborative. "This is a win for building occupants, a win for building owners, and a win for our environment."

The IECS is an overlay to the state energy code, not a replacement. All other applicable code requirements must still be met. The Building Division will oversee implementation and enforcement of the IECS, as they do with state energy and building codes. JoAnn Cornish, Director of the Department of Planning and Development, which includes the Building Division, states “This is a significant advancement. I am so proud knowing that this endeavor was part of the Planning Department’s efforts to build a greener more sustainable city for our residents.”

The Ithaca Energy Code Supplement is a major piece of the City’s Green New Deal (GND), which aims to achieve an equitable transition to carbon-neutrality community-wide by 2030. With the IECS now written into law, the City will soon be discussing other GND components, like the monumental task of shifting the entire community building stock, including all existing buildings, to become net-zero.

Luis Aguirre-Torres, the City’s new Director of Sustainability, affirms, “We will continue to lead by example, demonstrating our commitment to a just transition, through a series of follow up actions and policies centered on accelerating the transition to a carbon-free economy by 2030.”

More information about the Ithaca Energy Code Supplement is available at [www.ithacagreenbuilding.com](http://www.ithacagreenbuilding.com). Additional information will be posted on the City website.

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