

How a 111-Unit Property in San Mateo used incentives to future proof and install 30 brand new EV chargers

Sares Regis - San Mateo, CA



Property Details:

- **Location:** San Mateo, CA
- **Property Size:** 111 units & Parking Spaces, Secured Parking
- **Chargers Installed:** 30 level 1 Orange smart outlets
- **Incentive Funding Secured:** \$64,000 from Peninsula Clean Energy
- **ROI Timeline:** Under 3 years
- **Expected Annual Profit (2024):** \$4,922

The Challenge: Not Enough Chargers, No Additional Panel Capacity

Mode Apartments installed four EVSE chargers more than a decade ago through a CARB-funded program. At the time, that was more than enough. Fast forward to today, and the picture has changed.



Ten residents now drive electric vehicles (EVs), and the original four ports couldn't keep up. To manage access, the property required drivers to use a scheduling app and move their vehicles within four hours—or face a \$40 fine. Instead of encouraging turnover, the policy had the opposite effect: drivers stopped using the chargers altogether. The setup had become a bottleneck. With more than eight EV drivers and more on the way, property management knew they had to expand access before things got worse.

Wait times were long, charging access was unreliable, and residents were getting frustrated. But adding more chargers wasn't a simple option.

Because the property had used CARB incentives, the electrical load was capped under the original program rules. The panel was already maxed out, and there was no clear path to renegotiate. A full-service upgrade would be required but that was expensive and time-consuming and would've cost the building well over \$150k and take a few weeks to complete.

They needed more access but had to work within the constraints of their existing infrastructure.

The Fix: Use Incentives to Build a Smarter System

Orange worked with the Mode team to secure \$64,000 in incentives through Peninsula Clean Energy's EV Ready program. The program is designed to help properties install lower-power EV charging by covering upfront costs and offering free technical support. PCE focuses on Level 1 and power-managed Level 2 charging—solutions that are easier to install, more affordable, and don't require major electrical upgrades. It's built for scalability, not overkill.

With no available capacity on the existing panel, a creative solution was necessary. The team rerouted 125 amps from a parking structure fan and ran a new main line with a 120-amp breaker. This provided sufficient power for 30 Level 1 outlets, delivering 28,500 kWh of energy annually.

The installation was completed in three days without the need for panel upgrades, WiFi or cellular connections, or added maintenance. The result was simple, affordable infrastructure that operates efficiently.

The Outcome: Scalable EV Charging, No Service Upgrade Required

Mode now offers 34 total charging ports across the property—30 Orange outlets and the original 4 EVSE ports. Every resident EV driver now has reliable overnight charging in their assigned stall, with no need to move cars mid-charge or compete for space. Property managers get full visibility into usage via OrangeOS, with sessions automatically tracked and billed.

The system is projected to generate over \$4,222 in net annual revenue, paying for itself in under three years. And because Orange doesn't charge software or network fees, that revenue flows straight to the bottom line.

Why It Works

Mode Apartments shows what's possible when you rethink EV charging from the ground up. With their panel capped under legacy CARB rules, traditional expansion wasn't an option. Orange stepped in with a smarter approach—reallocating underused power, installing 30 low-power smart outlets, and delivering overnight charging to every EV driver on-site without a panel upgrade.

This wasn't just a cost-saving maneuver. It was a strategic move to futureproof the property. Residents now have reliable, dedicated charging in their own stalls—no need to rotate vehicles or compete for ports. Property managers get full control and transparency through OrangeOS, with no recurring fees, network contracts, or maintenance hassles cutting into NOI.

The \$64,000 in incentives helped make the project viable. But the real unlock was Orange's ability to think around the problem—reusing underutilized power, avoiding unnecessary upgrades and preserving the property's original investment. It's a system designed for growth, not just compliance.

If your panel's full or your service quote is climbing into six figures, Mode's story proves there's another way to achieve a straightforward, affordable investment in long-term resident satisfaction and NOI growth.

