

**CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda Date: October 18, 2021

Reviewed by: NA

SUBJECT: Multi-Family Electric Vehicle Charging Pilot Program.

REPORT BY: Michelle Plouse, Community Development Analyst
Jeff Bond, Community Development Director

SUMMARY

The Climate Action Committee has developed and recommended a pilot program to incentivize and analyze electric vehicle (EV) charger installations in multifamily buildings.

CLIMATE ACTION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

That the Council approve the program and fund from Measure DD revenue.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Council authorize staff to create the Multi-Family Electric Vehicle Charging Pilot Program, and fund and track the program with revenues associated with Measure DD.

BACKGROUND

The City of Albany Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) established the objective of 70% greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions by 2035, and net zero emissions by 2045. The CAAP focuses on reducing emissions from the City's largest emissions sectors, including transportation. An estimated 50% of GHG emissions in Albany result from the transportation sector. The CAAP sets the goal for 98% electric vehicle adoption by 2045, in addition to the goal for 25% vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction by 2045.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Easily-accessible charging infrastructure is a prerequisite to meeting Albany's electric vehicle goals. Multifamily buildings are a particular concern in this effort, as they house 43% of Albany's population but few of the City's electric vehicle (EV) drivers, since most EV drivers charge at home and tenants cannot take it upon themselves to install the necessary infrastructure to charge electric vehicles. Installing chargers in multifamily buildings is also often more complex and costly than doing so in single family homes. To address this need, the concept of a pilot program for installing EV chargers at multifamily buildings was proposed and developed by staff and the Climate Action Committee. The Climate Action Committee created a subcommittee to develop

the proposal described below, and shared the proposal with the entire Committee during their regular meeting on September 15, 2021. On September 15, the Climate Action Committee made a motion to recommend that the Council approve the program and allocate funds from Measure DD to implementation of the program. In 2020, voters approved Measure DD, which raised utility taxes for water, electricity, and natural gas, and recommended that the City Council use at least one-third of the additional revenue to fund actions in the CAAP.

Other Programs

Several regional incentive programs for multifamily charging infrastructure already exist. However, these programs have limited funding and different goals than the program proposed herein. PG&E offers incentives and infrastructure updates through the EV Charge Network program, but the program is full and therefore no longer accepting applications. The Bay Area Air Quality Management District's (BAAQMD) Charge! Program offers up to \$8000 per Level 2 charger. The program is very competitive and already full for this year. Further, the program prioritizes disadvantaged communities, and according to most criteria Albany does not qualify. East Bay Community Energy (EBCE) will be partnering with the California Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Project (CALeVIP) launching a program this December that will offer up to \$5,500 for Level 2 chargers and \$30,000 for DC Fast Chargers. This program is the only one open currently that Albany buildings can participate in. The program is first-come first-serve and is expected to be fully subscribed within an hour. Whether any Albany buildings participate depends on interest, preparation, and chance.

These regional programs are designed to increase charger installations, especially in low income and high priority areas. However, they do not offer insights into the barriers specific to City-level planning and permitting. These programs are also unlikely to fund projects in Albany because of Albany's small size, small buildings, and missing qualifications for prioritization. Unlike the regional programs, the pilot proposal recommended by the Climate Action Committee is designed not only to increase charger accessibility in Albany, but also to gather information and guide the City's efforts to increase EV adoption moving forward.

The proposed pilot program will help the City develop policies and procedures by providing valuable test cases and experience. The program will offer insight into every aspect of EV charger installation process, including various technical, economic, and logistical challenges. It will also help the City identify opportunities and strategies to overcome these challenges, making the process easier and more appealing for other multifamily buildings in the City. The information and insights from this program will be used to develop effective procedures, policies, programs, and outreach materials to expand EV charging infrastructure throughout the City. The proposed program would also provide the tenants of the participating buildings with access to charging, which will encourage EV adoption. Even a few chargers and EVs would help spread awareness of EVs and their benefits and catalyze a cycle of EV adoption and EV charger installation throughout the City.

Program Overview

Through implementation of the proposed multifamily electric vehicle charging pilot program, the City will partner with two to three multifamily buildings of 8-20 units to install electric vehicle charging stations in their tenant parking area(s).

Staff will convene focus groups to learn about the needs, motivations, and concerns of both building owners and tenants. Staff will also conduct detailed research into similar programs in other cities. Staff will notify eligible building owners of the opportunity to apply for the pilot program, and two to three buildings will be selected to participate in the program. The program will strive to advance equity by prioritizing disadvantaged and low-income communities in the selection process. Staff will work closely with the building owners throughout the planning, permitting, and installation of the chargers to both guide and learn from the installation process.

Staff will also conduct outreach to the tenants of the buildings selected for the pilot. Staff will work with the building owners to communicate to tenants the benefits of electric vehicles and the incentive programs they may be eligible for, including BAAQMD's Clean Cars for All, and the Clean Vehicle Assistance Program.

Staff proposes that the City provide an incentive of up to \$15,000 per building. This funding may be used for technical evaluations, charging equipment, and installation. The specific amount and uses of funding will be determined on a project-by-project basis. Staff proposes that the program budget be \$50,000, over several years, from Measure DD revenues. The maximum of \$15,000 for three buildings makes up \$45,000 worth of the budget. The remaining \$5,000 will be allocated to miscellaneous outreach and administration costs. The budget does not include staff time.

SUSTAINABILITY/SOCIAL EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

SUSTAINABILITY: This program would increase the number of electric vehicle chargers in the City, making EVs accessible to the tenants of participating buildings. The program is also designed to pave the way for future charger installations throughout the multifamily housing stock.

SOCIAL EQUITY: EV chargers in multifamily buildings are essential to provide equal access to electric vehicles. It is most convenient to charge at home, but most multifamily tenants lack the authority to install a charger in their building. EVs offer many advantages, including lower fuel prices, less maintenance, and no fumes. As they become the industry standard, it will be essential to provide charging access to multifamily tenants.

CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE

Adopting green building measures advances the Council Strategic Plan Initiative Goal 1, Objective 1 to "Advance Climate Action."

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The proposed budget for the program is \$50,000, to be expended over the next several years. It is recommended that the program be funded and tracked with revenues associated with Measure DD. As per the approved Measure DD language, the City Council will endeavor to expend at least one-third of the additional revenue generated from the increase in the maximum utility users' tax rate on those action items in the City's adopted Climate Action and Adaptation Plan. Adequate funding may need to be appropriated in a forthcoming mid-year budget revision.

Attachments

None.