

# Rockville Environment Commission and Traffic & Transportation Commission

## Draft Minutes of Thursday, July 28, 2022

WebEx Meeting

### Meeting Attendance

Commissioner	Present	Commissioner	Present
Hande Apaydin		Clark Reed, Chair	X
William McClain	X	Monica Saavoss	
Justus Getty	X	Pavitra Srinivasan	X
Susan Koester	X	Ted Stauderman	

**Traffic and Transportation Commission:** Kathleen Kleinman, Marc Plante, Shu-Ying Wong, Mike Stein, Doug Ierley

**City Staff:** Amanda Campbell, Staff Liaison; Erica Shingara, Chief, Environmental Management Division (EMD); Sarah Campbell, Intern; Andrew Leutkemeier, Bryan Barnett-Woods, Traffic and Transportation Division

**Guests:** Carrie Giles, ICF; Chuck Woolery; Leah Boggs, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG), David Stinchcomb, resident; David Potasznik

**Meeting Commencement:** Chair Reed convened the meeting at 7:06 p.m. and welcomed attendees and the Traffic and Transportation Commission. Members and guests introduced themselves.

**Approval of Agenda:** The agenda was approved with no changes.

**Community Forum:** None.

### **Rockville EV Background**

Rockville adopted a Climate Action Plan and a Clean Fleet resolution in January 2022. One-third of Rockville's greenhouse gas emissions come from transportation sector. In this year's budget, several vehicle-related actions were funded, including an electric vehicle readiness plan and a CIP for fleet charging as the City converts its fleet. The City is working with ICF to develop the EV plan. The plan will synchronize with Maryland, County, and MWCOG plans, and help the City be prepared to apply for federal infrastructure act funding. The City has over 1,000 electric vehicles registered, and about 123 charger ports listed on plugshare sites. The City fleet has 1 electric vehicle and 1 hybrid. The City's fleet plan aims to convert 60 light-duty fleet vehicles by 2030, starting with vehicles that are readily available for fleet uses that can be more easily met with electric models. The next phase would examine models that could serve heavy duty or police vehicles as these models become more readily available.

### **Introduction to Electric Vehicle Planning**

Carrie Giles, ICF, provided an overview of the analysis needed to define the number and location of private and public charging stations needed to support electric vehicles in the community. These plans, coordinated at the local, state and regional level will help to prepare the City to apply for state and federal formula and discretionary funding Federal funding through the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure program (NEVI) and electric grid funding through the Infrastructure Act will help support EV infrastructure. DOE and DOT often prefer a state or regional approach. Equity considerations are required in many of the funding streams. Maryland utilities have already had residential, municipal, and multi-family charging incentives and are recently rolling out school bus incentives. The County is further ahead on electrifying school buses.

<http://www.Driveelectric.gov> has information on the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. State plans are due by September 30; Maryland submitted their plan July 15. This first round of formula funding covers chargers within 1 mile of interstates or designated corridors. This will address highway charging. Community charging will be addressed under competitive charging grants — guidance will be published November 15. There are additional discretionary alternative fuel corridor grants that can go to states, MPOs or local governments. Rockville has designated corridors along I-270 and MD 355. One promising program is the community alternative fuel infrastructure grants which will go towards charging on public schools, public parks, community centers or recreation facilities, and public rights of way. Funding will cover up to 80% of project costs, including planning costs. The grants specifically prioritize chargers serving LMI communities and neighborhoods with high ratio of multi-family dwellings. Other Infrastructure Act programs include the carbon reduction fund which is distributed at the state and regional level.

ICF's work in the region and state involves a gap analysis to identify what Cities and counties can learn from each other regarding codes, permitting, policies and practices to facilitate charging. In MD, many municipalities are using copy-pasted codes from other jurisdictions that may need improvement. In some cases, nuances in the code prohibit running conduit under parking lots without triggering other involved site planning requirements, for example. The analysis will identify which sites have three-phase power available to support DC fast chargers since this is not available everywhere. Level 2 chargers use a simple 240 watt dryer-type outlet, but take many hours for a full charge.

Developing City EV plans will help the City be prepared to apply when program requirements are released. The electric vehicle charging site analysis location tool will allow criteria scenarios and will be made available to the City to update over time. GIS layers will include many factors such as low-moderate income communities, multi-family dwelling locations, transit and workplace locations. ICF can manually evaluate ideal sites and look up property owners. ICF will also examine cost estimates to the extent possible. The regional effort will focus on priority locations for chargers at a larger scale. For example, regions could work together to apply for funding for the top priority stations within several counties or municipalities.

When asked about the challenge of downloading multiple apps, Ms. Giles said that streamlining the charging experience and improving ease of use will be key to gaining public trust in EVs. Many people would rather use a credit card or apple pay, which are more accessible for low-

income residents. Many station operators are now retrofitting their stations with credit card readers to comply with state and federal funding requirements.

In response to questions, Ms. Giles said that charging networks will likely combine facilities similar to gas stations but with fast charging, and privately operated, home, and community-accessible chargers. A Maryland law went into effect on July 1<sup>st</sup> that requires HOAs to allow residents to install chargers in their assigned parking spaces. Now utilities can own and operate EV chargers at multi-family buildings – this is a new program. Rockville will be circulating a survey on electric vehicles and asking respondents to share any barriers in their particular situation as the City looks for ways to support charging.

### **Montgomery County's EV plans**

Brian Booher is in a new position as senior transportation planner for zero emissions vehicles. He shared that Montgomery County is supporting the regional initiatives. The County's greenhouse gas goal is to reach 80% reduction by 2027 and net zero emissions by 2035. Thirteen actions in the County's Climate Action Plan address transportation emissions, including electric vehicle actions. Transit, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure is part of a sustainable transportation network. Equity is a strong component of the County's Climate Action Plan.

Electric vehicles have a lower cost of ownership, reduce greenhouse gases, and are fun to drive. Already Montgomery County has seen a 60% increase in the number of plug-in vehicles registered. Chargers installed are increasing rapidly. 9.5% of new vehicles are electric-powered (nationwide is about 5%).

The County also plans to continue educational campaigns and work towards pulling together a discount on electric vehicles through a cooperative purchase once supply chains open up. The County is offering Ride and Drive events, training for EV dealers, and other educational programs. The County met their goal of over 1,000 pledges for residents' next vehicle to be electric. They will continue to build on this program as a foundation. Since vehicle purchases are more of a personal choice, arranging a bulk purchase is more challenging than with solar co-op. Still, the County is hoping that dealerships may be able to offer a discount when they see from public feedback that certain models are in high demand.

After this first phase of education and promoting transportation choice, the County will be developing its own electric vehicle plan that will complement the state and regional Council of Governments plans. Once a plan is developed in conjunction with stakeholders, the County will look to support workforce development, supply chains, and other actions in the EV market ecosystem. A draft plan is expected in spring 2024.

In addition to the monthly "Ask and EV Owner" webinars, the County is hosting two webinars with the Green Bank for charging at condo and townhome dwellings this September 6<sup>th</sup>, 6-8pm and September 11, 10am-noon.

### **Rockville Discussion, Feedback, Next Steps**

Questions discussed included whether a charger installed by a resident in the public right of way can stay reserved for the resident who installed it. The County has a program to allow residents to apply for a charger in the right of way. Other issues to tackle include balancing the

charging needs with sidewalk space for pedestrians and ADA specifications. The biggest challenge is providing charging opportunities for people without garages or driveways. The City of Rockville will be examining EV readiness as it relates to codes, zoning, and charging in the rights of way in the City's road network. The City will look at developing standards for cords over sidewalks, safety, and other specifications.

### **Traffic and Transportation Updates Related to the CAP**

Many of the initiatives that Traffic and Transportation Commission, the Rockville Pedestrian Advisory Committee and the Bicycle Advisory Committee are working on are included in the Climate Action Plan. As part of Vision Zero, the City is developing more pedestrian safety infrastructure and building more sidewalks. The City applied for two grants for bicycle infrastructure and complete streets. Two capital improvement projects for shared use paths, a complete streets project at North Stonestreet Avenue, a bus stop improvement project to help improve the transit experience. The Commission is also working with Planning and Development Services on the Rockville metro station visioning to increase development around the station. These actions increase walkability and transit accessibility, and help work towards a lower emissions multi-modal future.

### **Rockville Next Steps**

The City shared the City's EV Plan timeline, which is starting at this kick-off meeting. The City aims to draft a report by later winter or spring 2023. Stakeholder engagement involve a survey to residents, employers, and property owners and briefings to several Boards and Commissions as well as briefings to the Mayor and Council. The City plans to reach out to homeowners associations, tabling at community events, and find ways to engage residents and citizens who are not present online in this effort.

Environment Commission Chair Reed thanked the speakers for their presentations and thanked attendees for their discussion and mentioned that there may be opportunities for joint comment letters to the Mayor and Council on these topics.

### **Adjourn Joint Meeting and Move to Environment Commission Business**

#### **Environment Commission Business Meeting**

#### **Chair Report**

- Prior REC meeting minutes approval was postponed to September since a quorum of those who had attended the June meeting were not present.
- Thanked members for tabling at the Farmer's Market for the Solar Co-op and encouraged sign-ups for any other weekends that were not yet covered.

**Mayor and Council Report** – no report.

#### **Committee Reports**

Energy Committee: EC continues to discuss building codes and landscape equipment electrification. Erica Shingara noted that the County's proposed leaf blower ban would apply in Rockville if adopted and that it's unclear whether it applies to Rockville leaf vacuum trucks, which would be expensive to replace.

Climate Action Committee: CLAC met in June. Several members asked whether the City is a member of C40 Cities or the Global Covenant of Mayors. The group also discussed solar glass roads as a replacement for asphalt. They continue to research systems and considerations for collecting recyclables in public spaces.

The City is a member of GCOM through COG. The City continues to look at ways to encourage or install cool pavement options. The material would ideally be cost-competitive and readily available.

Watershed Committee: No report.

### **Parkland Dedication and Impact Fees – comment letter**

The Commission agreed to include language in the Commission's comment letter on the Parkland Dedication and Impact Fees proposal to reference ecosystem services and habitat connectivity as part of the criteria for parkland dedications. The Commission also agreed to include language that would exempt or reduce fees in lieu for buildings that achieve higher green building standards than code based on Energy Star scores.

### **Climate Action Plan Progress Report and EMD Updates (Climate Action Plan Action ID)**

- The City was awarded \$449,700 grant from MEA for the Phase 1 LED streetlight upgrades planned for FY2023 to replace 1,799 fixtures (M-02).
- Sustainability Program Manager: reviewing applications (at least 12 CAP actions)
- Flood Resiliency grants and Master Plan: City awarded \$2M in grants for stream restoration from MD DNR. City is working with Army Corps of Engineers on plan scope (C-20, C-21, M-11, M-13). Rainscapes: opened July 1 with increased funding (C-17)
- City Hall energy efficiency (M-01): The City applied for MEA grant reimbursement for 2nd floor upgrades. Rockville was awarded the grant from Maryland Smart Energy Communities for 3rd floor lighting upgrades, window film and thermostats. An FY23 budget amendment was approved July 11 at Mayor and Council for the project along with 1<sup>st</sup> floor City Hall lighting.
- Staff continues to work with Pepco to install electric vehicle charging stations. Site reviews include Thomas Farm Community Center, City Hall, and other locations (C-11).
- City staff will attend a nature-based infrastructure for climate solutions workshop (M-09) through a partnership between Montgomery County, Nature-Based Climate Solutions (NCS), the Urban Sustainability Directors Network, and Trust for Public Land.

### **Mayor and Council**

- July 18: Mayor and Council adopted Point of Sale Energy Disclosure (C-04) and Radon testing requirements. Staff is developing the City's radon testing program.

### **Future Outreach Events (C-09, C-13, C-05, C-17, C-25)**

- Solar Co-op Info Sessions, to include information on Access Solar – a new low-moderate income solar financing program: 8/18 at Noon.
- Ask an EV Owner Info Sessions: 1st Weds: <https://mygreenmontgomery.org/event/ask-an-ev-owner-5/all/>

**New Business:** None.

**Adjourn:** Chair Reed adjourned the meeting at 9:10 p.m.