

# ODOT Transportation Electrification Listening Sessions – Q&A

**About this document:** these questions were collected from attendees during two listening sessions held by ODOT Climate Office staff on Oct. 19 and Oct. 23, 2023. We edited some of the questions for clarity.

You can watch a recording of both listening sessions on ODOT's YouTube: [Oct. 19 session with EV industries and utilities](#) and [Oct. 23 session with EV advocates and the public](#).

If you have other questions or comments about our transportation electrification work, contact Matt Noble: [Matt.a.noble@odot.oregon.gov](mailto:Matt.a.noble@odot.oregon.gov) or 503-779-9868.

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## State and federal grant programs

### **Will the federal government or ODOT require the chargers being installed under the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure program (NEVI) to be both CCS and NACS compatible?**

As of November 2023, the federal government requires CCS connectors at all charging stations funded by the NEVI program. At ODOT we're still developing our strategy regarding NACS (and CHAdeMO) connectors at NEVI stations. In the near term, we will follow federal guidance on connector types. We're monitoring developments of the NACS connector for non-Tesla owners, like the SAE standardization process and Underwriters Laboratory testing.

We've heard from many EV drivers about incorporating NACS connectors at NEVI sites and we're grateful for their feedback. We will communicate our approach for NACS in more detail when we publish our Requests for Proposals for the Year 1 NEVI installation work in late 2023 or early 2024.

### **Does ODOT have a networking list for EV service provider companies to connect with each other about funding opportunities like the federal NEVI program?**

As of November 2023, no, we do not. That is something we may consider in the future.

We do have a new guidebook that outlines state and federal funding opportunities for EV charging infrastructure and other projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation, the [Every Mile Counts Funding Handbook for Local Governments](#).

### **How does proximity to services influence NEVI-funded station locations?**

EV drivers have told us that charging station proximity to existing services — like bathrooms, food, shopping etc. — is important. We agree and are considering how best to require or incentivize locating NEVI stations near services. We also recognize this could be a challenging requirement for stations in rural areas. We'll have more information about station proximity to services when we publish our Year 1 NEVI Request for Proposal in either late 2023 or early 2024.

### **Do all EV charging vendors need to be registered on OregonBuys to qualify for NEVI and the Community Charging Rebates Program?**

Vendors must have an OregonBuys account to bid on any ODOT work, including NEVI. Additionally, vendors must be pre-approved to bid on our NEVI Requests for Proposal. We expect to finalize our pre-approved NEVI vendor list in December 2023. Read more about the pre-approval process in our [June 2023 media release](#).

The Community Charging Rebates Program is separate from the OregonBuys system; EV charging vendors do not have to be registered with OregonBuys to be eligible to provide equipment under the program.

That said, the Community Charging Rebates program does have rules about using qualified equipment. Applicants to the program must install Level 2 charging equipment that has been qualified by either Pacific Power, Portland General Electric or the California Energy Commission's Communities in Charge program. [Read a PDF list of chargers that qualify](#).

### **What are the details on the federal Charging and Fueling Infrastructure grant that ODOT applied for in June 2023?**

We submitted two grant applications to the [CFI program](#).

The first application was a joint venture with the California and Washington departments of transportation. The three states submitted a vision for a network of 34 EV charging stations and 5 hydrogen refueling stations along Interstate 5 through all three states.

The second, ODOT-only application was for EV charging infrastructure on Interstate 84 for medium- and heavy-duty vehicles (semi-trucks, moving vans, etc.)

As of November 2023, we've yet to hear back from the federal government about the status of our applications.

**Is there any mechanism to standardize a payment structure for future public EV charging infrastructure funded by public dollars?**

Yes. The federal government requires that federally funded stations have multiple payment methods, including contactless pay via major credit/debit cards, and requires that providers offer either payment by phone or SMS. Payment methods must also be accessible to people with disabilities and for people who have limited English proficiency.

Examples of federal programs with these requirements are the [NEVI program](#), the [Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Grant program](#), and the [Electric Vehicle Charger Reliability and Accessibility Accelerator grant program](#).

We currently do not have a mechanism in place to standardize payment methods in projects funded by our Community Charging Rebates program.

**How might the suspension of DEQ's EV rebate program impact programs that ODOT is working on?**

Due to lack of funding, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality made the tough decision to [suspend their EV purchase rebate program in May 2023](#). They expect to reopen the program in 2024.

The suspension doesn't affect our programs or plans for EV infrastructure at the state or federal level.

**How will reliability and minimum standards be enforced with the NEVI and will other programs?**

One of the strategies we're considering is withholding some funding for a reliability performance standard that would only be paid out when the contractor demonstrates to us that they have met the minimum reliability requirement. We'll have more information about reliability standards when we publish our NEVI Request for Proposal in either late 2023 or early 2024.

**Do any of the programs offered have a Tax Payer ID (TIN) Cap for participation?**

No, but our Community Charging Rebates program has a \$150,000 total rebate cap for any single entity in one funding cycle.

## Community outreach and education

### **Is ODOT reaching out to local planning commissions — for example the League of Oregon Cities — to help them implement EV charging into their transportation planning?**

We consistently update our local partners — area commissions on transportation, metro planning organizations, transit groups, etc. — about our work, and maintain those professional relationships to share knowledge about EV charging planning.

One example is our [GO EV Charge webpage](#), which has tools for local governments to help them plan for future EV charging infrastructure. One of the tools, the Guide for Oregon EV Charging Deployment, has information about EV charging basics, best practices in design and equitable siting, planning level cost estimates and funding resources.

Another example is the [Every Mile Counts Funding Handbook for Local Governments](#). The handbook outlines state and federal funding opportunities for EV charging infrastructure and other projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation.

### **Is ODOT working with tourist organizations on EV infrastructure and related topics to ensure EV drivers can get to where they want to go?**

Our EV infrastructure work has intersected with Oregon's tourism industry in a few ways:

- We consulted with Oregon State Parks on their [ongoing project to bring EV charging to eight state parks](#).
- We have presented on our Community Charging Rebates program at various events held by Oregon tourist organizations.
- Our Community Charging Rebates program is open to tourist destinations to apply for funding. For example, [Inn at Canon Beach](#) was awarded funding from this program in 2023.
- We've also worked with Travel Oregon, Business Oregon and the Travel Information Council to ensure signage for EV charging stations is clear and consistent.

### **Are there resources for apartment complexes, businesses, cities, or other entities to help them install EV charging?**

Yes. The first is our [Community Charging Rebates Program](#), which reimburses a big portion of project costs to install level 2 charging at apartment complexes and publicly accessible parking areas.

The second resource is our [GO EV Charge webpage](#). The webpage has resources for those entities on how to install EV chargers and includes information on how to ensure those projects are equitable, cost effective, and meet community needs.

Another good resource is the [Vehicle Charging Innovations for Multi-Unit Dwellings webpage](#). It has a host of tools and resources designed to help building managers/owners, residents, electric utilities and

local governments install charging at multi-family housing. We're not involved with the website; it was created through a partnership of several EV-focused organizations.

### **Can ODOT help connect people with EV clubs or EV support groups, to help build community around EVs?**

Part of our pledge to electrifying our transportation system is to educate folks about the benefits of EVs and build community around them. Connecting EV users with other EV users would further that goal, and is something we'll consider as we create more EV-related resources for people in Oregon.

### **How has ODOT engaged with Oregon's utilities about public EV charging infrastructure?**

Utilities are important partners in our electrification plans, and we regularly communicate with them. For example, in June 2022 we used a formal "request for information" process to ask utilities for grid considerations for the [five-year NEVI program](#).

We've also regularly invited utilities to our online listening and information sessions, and they've given us good feedback on our work.

## Improving the public charging experience

### **What is being done to address the poor reliability of some public EV chargers?**

Charger reliability or "up time" is a top priority for us, and we know it's a big concern for EV drivers. The federal government agrees, and in 2023 they announced new [federal funding for repairs or replacement of existing EV chargers](#). We submitted a proposal to this grant opportunity in November 2023.

The federal NEVI program also has requirements for charger reliability: 97% minimum uptime. This means each charging port must be working at least 97% of the time, all day, every day. The NEVI program also requires companies to create (and follow) a five-year post installation maintenance plan.

### **What is ODOT doing to ensure people feel safe when using public EV chargers, especially late at night or in remote locations?**

Feeling safe while charging an EV is one of the most consistent pieces of feedback we've received from EV drivers over the last several years. It's important to current EV drivers, and important to people considering an EV for their next vehicle.

One of the ways we're committing to safe EV charging is through our contracts for public charging station installation work. We're considering requirements or incentives for station features like 24/7 lighting, security cameras, on-site staff, and emergency call boxes. We're also encouraging station locations near other businesses and services, when possible.

### **How does Tesla agreeing to open their NACS chargers to non-Tesla vehicles influence ODOT's future public EV charging infrastructure plans?**

As of November 2023, we're still thinking through the recent announcements from Tesla and other manufacturers about the NACS interoperability and how that may impact our work. Our commitment to easy, equitable and reliable charging in Oregon will guide our decisions.

### **Will the EV charging infrastructure Oregon is building now be adaptable to work with new batteries and other new technology?**

In theory, yes. We strive to "future proof" EV infrastructure where we can. We don't build, install, own or operate public EV charging infrastructure, but we can make policy recommendations at the state and federal level on the importance of future proofing.

For example, EV charging stations installed in Oregon with NEVI funds will be required to have at least one of the four charging ports at a higher power than the minimum 150kw. In addition, we'll require wiring for additional high-powered chargers at select sites, giving those stations the potential for future capacity upgrades.

We're also considering setting aside some NEVI dollars to help fund future station upgrades.

## Other topics

### **How is ODOT ensuring electric active transportation (i.e. e-bikes) are part of EV charging infrastructure planning?**

Our commitment to electric active transportation, like electric bikes and scooters, is strong. We're working to increase charging access for these devices. Two recent examples:

- We fund 110v outlets at multi-family housing through our Community Charging Rebates program.
- We also included a [110v charging port for e-bikes](#) on the newly upgraded stations along the West Coast Electric Highway as part of our partnership with the network's owner, EVCS.

We're considering a similar standard for selected projects funded through the NEVI program. We'll communicate more details about this when the Request for Proposals for the Year 1 NEVI work are published in late 2023 or early 2024.

Providing non-driving options like biking is core to our efforts to reduce how often and how far people drive, which in turn will reduce emissions from transportation. Learn more about our emission reduction efforts on our [transportation emissions website](#).

**As we move towards vehicle electrification, how can ODOT and Oregon move toward road user fees that equitably support electrification?**

Road user fees, [like the voluntary road use charge program we already have in place, OReGO](#), are key to transforming how we pay to maintain Oregon's roads moving into the future. However, we need action from Oregon's state legislature to mandate road use charging for all new vehicles.

**Will Oregon's electric grid be able to support all the new EV charging infrastructure, both private and public?**

Oregon's utilities are preparing now to accommodate the expected growth in EVs. It's important to remember that the shift to EVs will happen gradually, not overnight. This gives utilities time to plan for the transition and upgrade their grids where needed.

Changes to electricity needs are also not a new concept for our utility partners. The increased demands on the grid from EVs are comparable to historic demand growth trends, like the advent of home air conditioning units over the last 30 years. Lessons learned from that growth can be applied to the rise in EV charging needs.

Learn more about how utilities are preparing for EVs in the Oregon Department of Energy's blog post: [Electric Vehicles: Is Oregon's Grid Ready?](#)

**Will renewable energy, like wind and solar, be enough alone to support the transition to EVs?**

A 2021 Oregon state law is moving us towards a cleaner electricity future by requiring some larger electricity providers to lower greenhouse gas emissions they produce, and ultimately moving towards net-zero emissions by 2040. Renewable energy will be an important part (and eventually, the only part) of that transition. [Read more about Oregon's clean energy targets on this Oregon DEQ webpage.](#)

**Are "energy as a service" or "trucks as a service" seriously considered as an option to leverage federal and state funding opportunities, especially in big fleet projects?**

We're currently not considering either service option for state or federal funding opportunities. Other state or local fleets may be considering such options.

**Are there funding opportunities designed to help smaller towns or tourist destinations install DC fast chargers?**

Yes, there are three funding opportunities suited for small towns or tourist destinations.

The first is our [Community Charging Rebates](#) program, which reimburses a portion of the cost of buying and installing Level 2 charging at publicly accessible parking areas. We will have a new funding round for the program in 2024.

The second opportunity is the federal [Carbon Reduction Program](#), which funds projects that reduce emissions from transportation. Oregon will receive \$82 million over five years for such projects in our state. A portion of that money is set aside for “small urban and rural areas” with populations under 200,000. There will be a funding round for the Carbon Reduction program in 2024.

The third opportunity is the federal [Charging and Fueling Infrastructure](#) grant program. Eligible applicants for the program are State and local governments, federally recognized Tribes and affiliated groups, planning and project organizations, and transportation providers.

### **How will ODOT document impacts to greenhouse gas emissions, equity, and air quality that result from agency electrification programs?**

Tracking our progress is important. It helps us adjust and improve our work, and keeps it transparent to people in Oregon.

ODOT and other state agencies are tracking our collective efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation on our [dedicated website](#). Our data says that by 2050, emissions from transportation will be 60% lower than they were in 1990.

On the equity side, we’re working with our ODOT Social Equity office to help us determine priority communities for investments in EV infrastructure. For example, our Community Charging Rebates program is guided by an [interactive map](#) that helps us determine rural and disadvantaged communities. The majority of CCR program funds (70%) are reserved for projects in rural and disadvantaged communities.

### **Do Oregon state agencies have a centralized repository to store greenhouse gas emissions data related to state transportation programs?**

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality tracks greenhouse gas emissions from various sectors on their [greenhouse gas inventory webpage](#). Emissions from transportation make up about 35% of total emissions in Oregon.

ODOT and other agencies are actively working to reduce those emissions. By 2050, we’re on track to lower emissions 60% below what they were in 1990. Learn how we’ll get there on our [Oregon transportation emissions website](#).

In 2021 we completed a study of emissions associated with ODOT’s maintenance and construction work. You can read the [full report PDF](#) online but in brief, fuel use in vehicles and production of construction materials like asphalt and concrete top the list of greenhouse gas emission sources from our work. The study recommends ways to reduce those emissions.

Finally, we’ve added a new layer of emissions evaluation to our construction projects in the [Statewide Transportation Improvement Program](#). The STIP is the primary way transportation projects are selected and funded in Oregon, so evaluating potential emissions from different projects is important. Our goal is to have a final project mix that results in a net reduction in emissions.



