

## Sustainability Group – January 3, 2022

### *Summary of issues for the Pepco proposal to install public EV chargers in the Town*

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#### **Context:**

The nature of private vehicles is well on the way to the radical change from combustion to electric with upwards of 20 million EV cars predicted on the roads by 2030. This will bring many benefits to both individuals and communities. It will also alter our patterns and habits of use. Those currently with EVs advise that most charging happens at home for those who can, but that “topping up” where convenient is both useful and becoming more expected when visiting businesses, offices, schools, etc. This will become the standard expectation within the next dozen years for those driving to the Town facilities (both residents and visitors).

Last January, 2021, the Town renewed its commitment to support the Paris Climate goals that require substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, and this conversion to EVs represents a significant opportunity to further the required reductions. Enabling the conversion is in the interest of the Town.

Pepco is executing a program in which 250 EV Public Charging Network stations will be installed on government-owned or controlled property within Pepco’s Maryland service territory, **at no cost to the government site hosts.**

Pepco’s full-service charging solution includes:

- Engineering, design and construction of the site
- Purchase of all required equipment and network software
- Ongoing operation of the charging stations including any required maintenance
- Ownership of all equipment and costs related to the energy delivery to the charging stations

The two available types of chargers are DC Fast Chargers which require a 480V hook up and Level 2 chargers which require 240V hook-up. Only Level 2 chargers are compatible with the electrical infrastructure in town. A driver would pay for a charge by credit card. Public chargers would provide a benefit to residents who are considering investing in an EV but cannot physically or financially install a charger of their own.

With the pending *Build Back Better* legislation and other promotional activities, other opportunities may well appear down the road. They would likely have differing requirements for qualifying, however, with differing costs, and design implications. At present, the Pepco program appears to have relatively few major downsides.

#### **Issues of concern:**

- **Increased traffic:** Given the lack of stores, inconvenient overall location, and slower Level 2 charging, WG chargers will not be useful to those who are not actually visiting the Town facilities. There is a low likelihood of measurable increases to traffic.

- **Commercial use of Town property:** Authorizing the installation of EV chargers in town will provide a public benefit to town residents and visitors as it will make it more convenient and less time-consuming to use electric vehicles to reduce their carbon emissions from transportation. The Planning Commission has noted that Council actions that provide a public benefit are not subject to town ordinances and zoning requirements regarding commercial activity.
- **Incompatible use of Town property:** The HPC has outlined the historic uses of each of the locations and commented on the impacts, potential mitigations, and how the Town has adapted over the years to other technologies.
- **Safety:** Due to their own liability, Pepco will engineer a safe installation. Thus, protection from vehicles and snowplows in the form of bollards or sections of a wooden guardrail (similar to at Woodward Park) would be required.
- **Un sightliness:** Pepco has offered to adapt their standard design to accommodate the aesthetics of the Grove. The Town Council will make the final judgment about whether their proposal succeeds.
- **Vandalism:** Pepco is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the chargers.

#### Locations:

The Sustainability Group has recommended the Chestnut Road location for the reasons below, but feels the other two locations have advantages as well.

- **Chestnut Road** gives the most benefit to the Town as it serves visitors to the Hall, Church, Womans Club, and also Circle residents who cannot park next to their house to charge. It would also be the most exposed location, and might conflict with Womans Club parking.
- **Woodward Park** is the least obtrusive but is the least benefit to the Town as it does not well serve visitors to the Town facilities or Circle. This location may conflict with tennis player parking. An alternate Park location may be the parking area adjacent to the backstop. Either Park option may require different management of the gate to the Park.
- **Center Street** is the location where visitors would most expect chargers, but would have some impact on “appreciation” of the Hall and Chapel Park. This location may conflict with Hall parking. A location in this parking area closer to Chestnut Road would have less impact on desirable parking spots and “appreciation”.

#### Design goals:

- **Mass/size of equipment** must be in scale with other Grove landscape elements, minimizing the various parts of the assembly to their necessary purpose. The color of the parts of the assembly is significant to the perception of scale and should also be chosen to mitigate the impact on the landscaped parks.
- **Character** of the assembly and parts such as concrete pad, support post, bollards, signage and cable management devices. must be compatible with other Grove landscape elements
- **Screening** of transformer cabinet with fencing or landscaping must be allowable.