Recommendation Report Summary

SUBJECT: Electric Vehicle Charging Policy and pricing options

TO: Committee of the Whole

FROM: Public Works

Transportation

Report Number: PWS-06-26

Wards Affected: All

Date to Committee: March 3, 2026

Date to Council: March 10, 2026

Recommendation

Approve the Electric Vehicle Charging Stations on City Property Corporate Policy attached as Appendix A to public works report PWS-06-26; and

Approve option 4 of the pricing strategy as outlined in public works report PWS-06-26; and

Report back with the necessary amendments to the Rates and Fees By-law as well as the Parking and Idling By-law for approval by City Council to implement the fees in Q2 2026.

Executive Summary

Purpose of report:

To recommend a fee structure be implemented for the City's publicly available electric vehicle (EV) chargers and establish a corporate policy for EV charging.

Key findings:

- Report PWS-02-25 EV Charging Policy and Fee Options was presented to City Council in July 2025 and deferred for staff to conduct additional data analysis and engage with the Downtown Parking Advisory Committee.
- Since adopting its 2014 Community Energy Plan, Burlington has significantly expanded EV charging infrastructure through public and private investment, supporting its goal of becoming a net carbon neutral community by 2050.
- Staff found most Ontario municipalities charge $1–$3/hour for Level 2 EV charging, some increase rates after initial hours, and a few offer free charging with parking fees.

- To help manage the increasing inventory of City owned EV charging stations, staff have developed an Electric Vehicle Charging Stations on City Property Policy to provide guidance on the operation, maintenance, monitoring and reporting of the chargers.

Implications:

- The City is facing rising costs for maintenance, repairs, and electricity as its electric vehicle charging infrastructure expands and utilization increases.

Background

In 2014, City Council approved a Community Energy Plan for Burlington that included an action to support electric mobility: Monitor the electric vehicle (EV) market and investigate the feasibility of EV charging stations at City facilities, including downtown parking lots. Supporting electric mobility was further strengthened in the 2020 Climate Action Plan where it was identified as a key program area to help achieve the target to be a net carbon neutral community by 2050.

Since the approval of the Community Energy Plan, the City, institutions, and private businesses have actively invested in charging infrastructure to help support the adoption of EVs in Burlington. Between 2015 and 2022, the City steadily expanded its EV charging network through multiple provincial, federal, and partner funding programs. Installations grew from two stations in 2015 to 49 charging stations (94 charging heads) in 2025. With 20 of those charging stations (37 charging heads) located in the downtown core and the remaining 29 (57 charging heads) at various locations in the community, including the City's only Level 3 chargers, with most available for public use. As a result, from 2021 to 2024 electricity use increased by nearly 400%.

Industry Scan

Staff reviewed online data for municipal charging fees in 22 municipalities located in southwestern/central Ontario. More information can be found in Appendix B.

- Seventeen municipalities (77%) charge an hourly charging fee, ranging from $1.00 - $3.00 per hour (for Level 2 chargers). Eight out of 17 (47%) charge $1.50 - $2.00 per hour.
- Six municipalities implemented a secondary charge, meaning a higher hourly rate is applied following a certain number of either free or a lower hourly rate.
- Four municipalities offer free charging (but parking fees apply where applicable).

Operational and Lifecycle Costs

The cost of ownership of the City EV charging infrastructure has increased with an annual operating cost of approximately $120,000 to cover electricity, licensing fees (cloud plan), maintenance/repairs and replacements. This does not include staff time required to operate and maintain the stations.

The current asset value of the City's charging infrastructure is estimated at just over $1.3 million. The cost of installing a new Level 2 charging station is budgeted at $25,000 and a Level 3 charging station at $50,000 although, this could vary depending on the capacity of the

Level 3 charger. The costs of repairing stations range from $1,000 to $8,000 depending on the severity of the repair.

In 2022, the responsibility to install, operate, maintain and monitor the charging stations was consolidated under the Energy and Emissions staff team. As the EV charging inventory continues to grow, so has the time required to manage the inventory under the existing staff complement.

Downtown Economic Development

One of the consequences of offering free charging at the City's EV charging stations is the disincentive to move a vehicle even after it's fully charged. Data from the City's downtown charging stations indicates that vehicles are left plugged in beyond the four-hour maximum time. There is a four-hour limit for charging in the Parking and Idling Bylaw which is currently enforced on a complaint basis.

The City's Downtown Parking Master Plan (PWS-05-26) highlights that increasing vehicle turnover is correlated with increasing patronage to downtown businesses and optimizing vehicle turnover is a recommended objective of any future changes to the Parking and Idling Bylaw. Introducing an EV charging fee is expected to improve availability at the City's chargers by encouraging drivers to move their vehicles once charging is complete, freeing up spaces for other EV users and reducing the likelihood of fees from extended parking.

In November 2025, staff presented data and the recommended option, less the overnight portion, to the Downtown Parking Advisory Committee. Follow-up material was provided to the Committee in early 2026 and included in Appendix B – "Additional information provided to the downtown parking advisory committee."

Achieving Climate Action Objectives

City Council has supported free EV charging at City owned chargers to incentivize EV ownership in Burlington, to help reduce emissions, and work towards the target to be a net carbon neutral community by 2050. Staff track EV ownership data published by the Ministry of Transportation and since 2019, ownership of battery electric vehicles (full electric) in Burlington has increased by almost 500 percent. Local EV test drive events with Plug'n Drive have also helped to promote the benefits of electric mobility.

Public Feedback/Opinion

Sustainability staff engaged the public to prioritize action areas for the Burlington Climate Plan (PWS-01-26). Support for City owned EV charging stations is low compared to other areas such as walking and cycling, transit, sustainable new building standards, and the Better Homes Burlington program. Providing free charging is seen to serve a small part of the population who can afford EVs and, therefore, is not seen to be equitable.

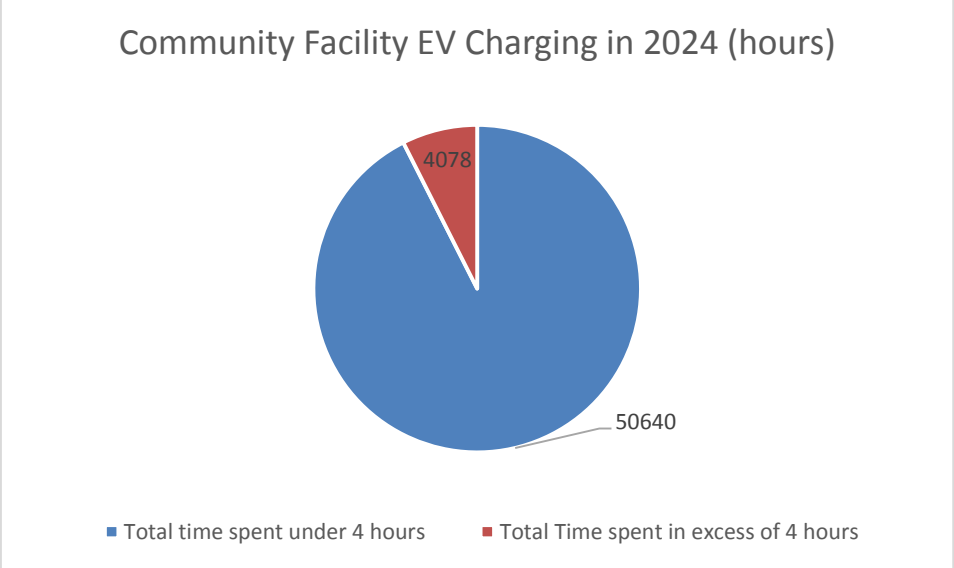
To help manage the increasing inventory of City owned EV charging stations, staff have developed an EV Charging Stations on City Property corporate policy (refer to Appendix A) to provide guidance on the operation, maintenance, monitoring and reporting of the chargers.

Analysis

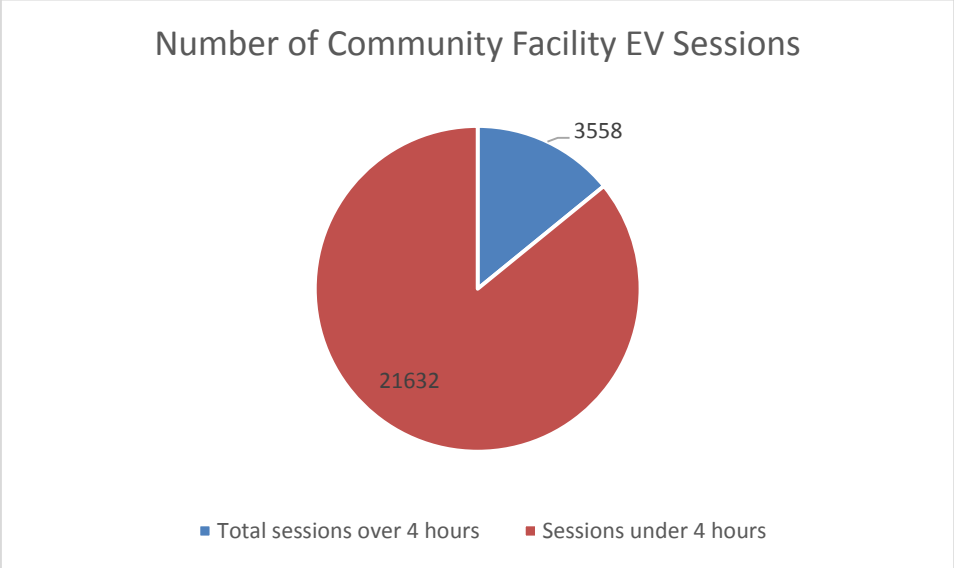
Overstay Data

Below is 2024 data for Level 2 stations at both community facilities and downtown parking lots, excluding chargers where data is not available (City Hall) and City fleet charging sessions.

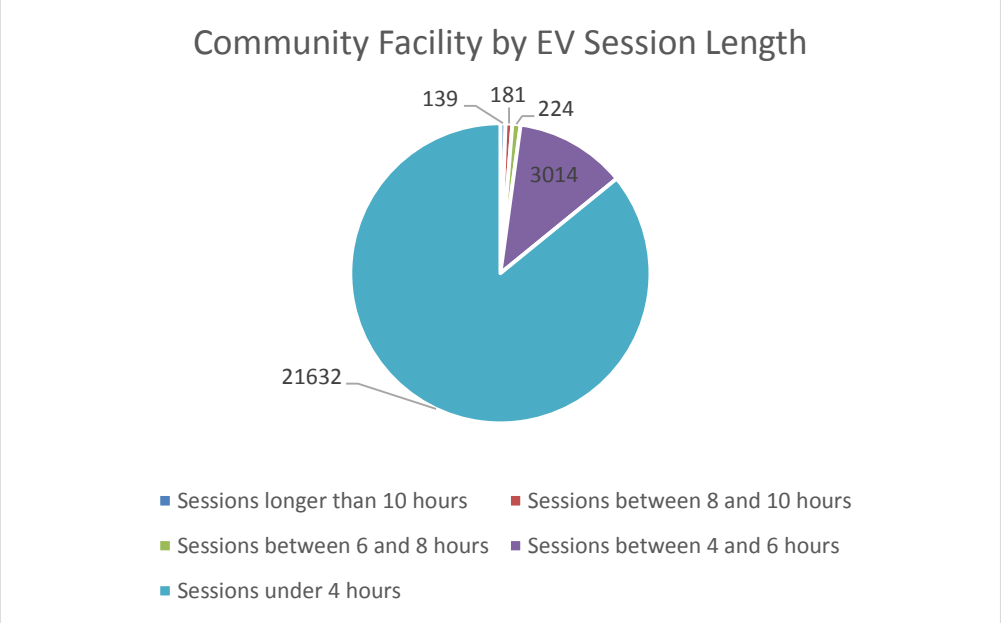
Community Facilities



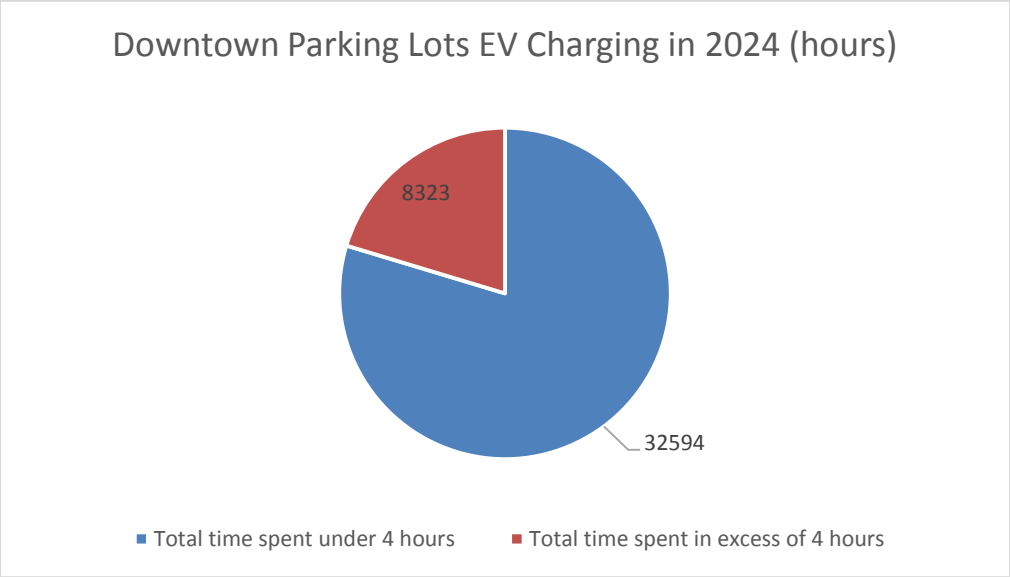
Vehicles plugged in at community facilities for just under 55,000 hours in 2024 with 7.5% of sessions exceeding 4 hours in length. This shows that most of these stations are used appropriately and primarily as a convenience when users are using the amenities on site.



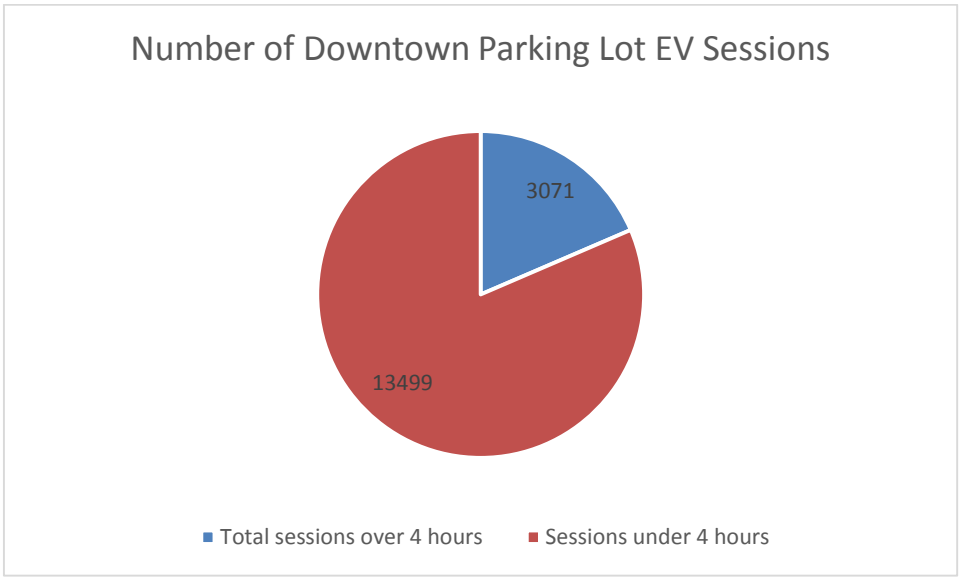
Community facilities had a total of 25,190 charging sessions in 2024. Of those sessions, 3,558 exceeded 4 hours (14.1%) primarily in the range of 4-6 hours as illustrated below.



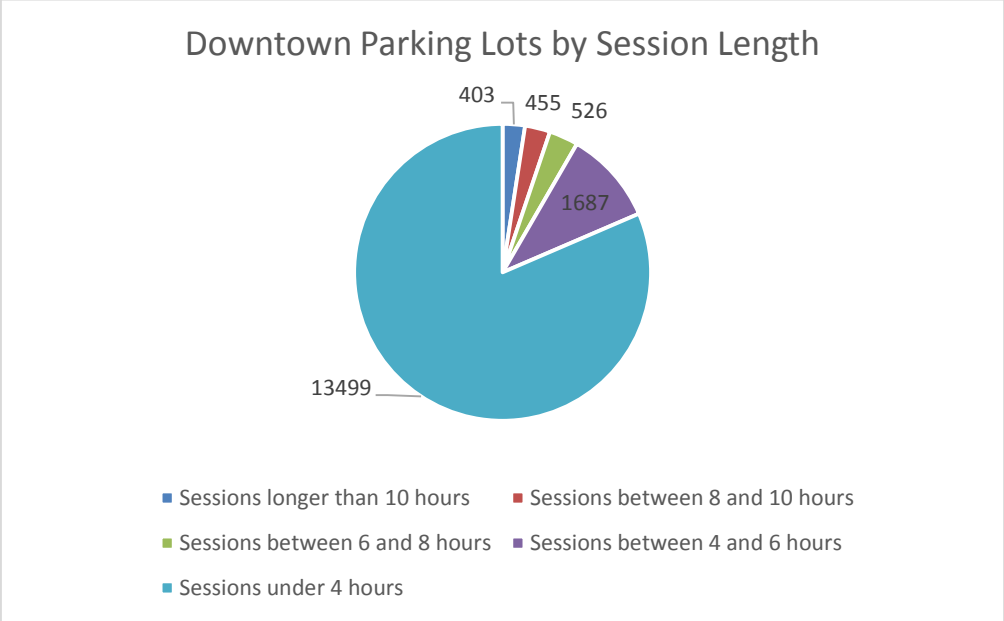
Downtown Facilities



In 2024, vehicles were plugged in at Downtown parking lots for just under 41,000 hours, with 18.5% exceeding 4 hours in length which is more than double the rate experienced at community facilities. This trend may be attributed to limited access to charging infrastructure within downtown high-rise residential and commercial buildings, suggesting that EV charging in the downtown core serves as a necessity rather than a convenience for many users. For this reason, the proposed pricing structures suggested below include a higher hourly rate for downtown locations, aimed at managing demand and encouraging turnover.

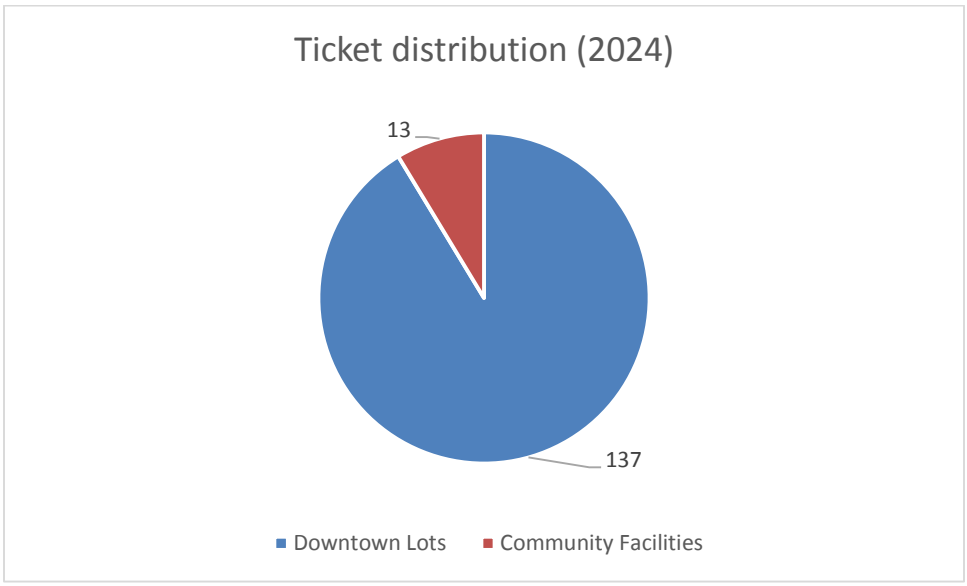


Downtown parking lots saw a total of 16,570 charging sessions in 2024. Of those sessions, 3,071 exceeded 4 hours (18.5%) with a number of these sessions in excess of 6-10 hours, further supporting the overstay issues in the downtown core as mentioned above.



Ticket data

In 2024, 150 tickets were issued for either staying longer than 4 hours at a charging station or parking in a charging station stall without plugging in with the breakdown between community facilities and downtown parking lots shown below.



Recommendation Details

As a result of the data analysis shown above and comments previously received from City Council when presenting report PWS-02-25 EV Charging Policy and Fee Options in July 2025, staff are presenting four fee schedules.

Option 1 – Location based fee schedule

Introduce an hourly charging rate and subsequent higher tiered rate at City owned EV charging stations. The proposed rate for Level 2 chargers would be location based (downtown core versus community facilities) and a third rate for Level 3 chargers. Fees for each location and charging level would be as indicated in the chart below.

	Downtown Chargers	Community Facility Chargers	Level 3 Chargers
First 4 hours	$2.00/hr.	$1.50/hr.	$10.00/hr.
After 4 hours	$4.00/hr.	$4.00/hr.	$10.00/hr.

Option 2 – Free to begin, fee following, location based

Maintain free charging for the first half hour for City owned Level 3 EV Chargers and free charging for the first hour for City owned Level 2 EV Chargers. Introduce an hourly location-based fee as indicated in the chart below after the free period ends.

	Downtown Chargers	Community Facilities	Level 3 Chargers
First 30 minutes	Free	Free	Free
30 minutes – 1 hour	Free	Free	$10.00/hr.
After first hour	$2.00/hr.	$1.50/hr.	$10.00/hr.

Option 3 – Location based fee schedule, higher tiered fee

Like Option 1, but with a lower first 4-hour price and a higher tier fee after 4 hours for both Level 2 and 3 chargers.

	Downtown Chargers	Community Facilities	Level 3 Chargers
First 4 hours	$1.50/hr.	$1.00/hr.	$7.00/hr.
After 4 hours	$6.00/hr.	$6.00/hr.	$15.00/hr.

Option 4 – Location based fee schedule, tiered fee and overnight rate

Like Option 1, but with a lower overnight rate.

	Downtown Chargers	Community Facility Chargers	Level 3 Chargers
First 4 hours	$2.00/hr.	$1.50/hr.	$10.00/hr.
After 4 hours	$4.00/hr.	$4.00/hr.	$10.00/hr.
9pm – 7am	$0.50/hr.	$0.50/hr.	$10.00/hr

Considerations for all options

The City is currently not recovering any of the costs of owning and operating the EV charging network and costs are growing annually. Free charging is resulting in less parking turnover in downtown EV charging stalls and some residents noted that providing 'free' EV charging is not equitable for those who drive traditional vehicles.

When a fee structure has been implemented, the private sector may also be more inclined to install charging stations on private property as they will no longer be competing with free charging.

Introducing a fee may be unpopular with some EV drivers who have become accustomed to free charging. A communication campaign will be required to provide EV drivers adequate notice. The City's EV chargers can warn drivers of the increasing charge rate after four hours via email and/or text.

Any fee structure implemented would still be subject to all other portions of the Parking and Idling Bylaw including during snow events.

The net funds collected would be separated into revenue collected by the downtown chargers and community chargers. These funds would be used to pay for the electricity, maintenance and repair of each group of charging stations. In addition, a portion of the EV charging fee (10%) will be paid to ChargePoint to cover their administrative costs.

In all scenarios a 20-minute grace period would also be implemented before the second level fee would begin at Level 2 stations. A $100 upset limit will also be implemented at all Level 2 stations.

Potential Recovered Funds

Using 2024 data, the potential revenue for Level 2 stations would be as follows for each of the options provided above. It can be expected that usage patterns will change as a result of implementing a fee. It should also be noted that the calculations for Option 4 are more difficult to calculate given the granularity of the data and may not be as accurate as the other options.

Downtown Parking Lots				
	Option 1	**Option 2**	**Option 3**	**Option 4**
Fees collected during base tier pricing*	$ 65,188	$ -	$ 48,891	$ 52,740
Fees collected during higher tier pricing*	$ 33,290	$ 75,484	$ 49,935	$ 19,684
Fees collected overnight	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 4,189
Downtown Fees Collected	$ 98,478	$ 75,484	$ 98,826	$ 76,613
10% Fee to ChargePoint	$ -9,848	$ -7,548	$ -9,883	$ -7,661
Operating Costs	$ -61,615	$ -61,615	$ -61,615	$ -61,615
Estimated annual capital cost	$ -8,000	$ -8,000	$ -8,000	$ -8,000
Downtown Net Revenue Collected	**$ 19,015**	**$ -1,679**	**$ 19,328**	**$ -663**
Community Facilities				
	Option 1	**Option 2**	**Option 3**	**Option 4**
Fees collected during base tier pricing*	$ 75,960	$ -	$ 50,640	$ 70,422
Fees collected during higher tier pricing*	$ 16,312	$ 80,178	$ 24,468	$ 13,940
Fees collected overnight	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 2,904
Community Facility Fees Collected	$ 92,272	$ 80,178	$ 75,108	$ 87,266
10% Fee to ChargePoint	$ -9,227	$ -8,018	$ -7,511	$ -8,727
Operating Costs	$ -58,217	$ -58,217	$ -58,217	$ -58,217
Estimated annual capital cost	$ -12,000	$ -12,000	$ -12,000	$ -12,000
Community Facilities Net Revenue Collected	**$ 12,828**	**$ 1,943**	**$ -2,620**	**$ 8,322**
Total Net Revenue Collected	**$ 31,843**	**$ 264**	**$ 16,708**	**$ 7,659**

*In options 1, 3 and 4, higher tier pricing occurs after 4 hours during the day; in option 2 after 1 hour.

The revenue collected from all options is projected to cover the cost of electricity, maintenance, and repair. Staff are recommending Option 4 as it provides both the supplementary higher rate after four hours to incentivize drivers to move their vehicles after charging as well as the additional lower overnight rate which is meant to encourage residents living close to the chargers to be able to continue to use the chargers overnight, so the chargers do not sit idle, and the user is not penalized for leaving the vehicle there for long periods of time.

Examples of charges

Below are examples of charges for each scenario presented above.

Scenario	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
User parks at a downtown charger for 4.5 hours at a Level 2 station	$10.00	$7.00	$9.00	$10.00
User parks at a community facility for 2.5 hours at a Level 2 station	$3.75	$2.25	$2.50	$3.75
User parks at a Level 3 charger for 45 minutes	$7.50	$2.50	$5.25	$7.50
User parks at a downtown Level 2 station from 10pm to 6am	$24.00	$14.00	$30.00	$4.00

Key Dates & Milestones

Pending approval of the recommended option:

- Q2 2026 - Report to amend the Rates and Fees bylaw as well as the Parking and Idling Bylaw
- Q2 2026 - Communications campaign to advise EV charging rates
- Q3 2026 - Implementation date for introduction of hourly charging fee pending approval
- Q2 2027 - Update report one year after implementation

Implications

- Staff will monitor the rates of usage of the EV charging stations and cost recovery from charging fees and report back in a year from the date of implementation to recommend any necessary changes.
- A communications plan will be developed and implemented to engage the community and EV drivers on the new fees, in advance of being introduced.
- It is estimated that just over 500 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions have been saved through the utilization of the City's EV charging stations.

References

EICS-16-22 Electric Mobility Strategy
PWS-02-25 Electric Vehicle Charging Policy and fee options
Climate Action Plan

Strategic Alignment

- ☑ Designing and delivering complete communities
- ☐ Providing the best services and experiences
- ☑ Protecting and improving the natural environment and taking action on climate change
- ☐ Driving organizational performance

Author:

Tom Pedlar
Supervisor, Energy & Emissions

Appendices:

A. EV Charging Stations on City Property corporate policy
B. Additional information provided to the Downtown Parking Advisory Committee

Draft By-laws for Approval at Council:
Report Approval:

All reports are reviewed and approved by the Commissioner, Head of Corporate Affairs, Chief Financial Officer, and Commissioner of Legal and Legislative Services/City Solicitor.