



October 20, 2026

RE: Support for Revising the City's EV Charging Strategy

To: Mayor, Vice Mayor, and City Council

CC: City Manager; Director, Transportation & Environmental Services; Director, Office of Climate Action

Dear Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Members of City Council:

The Environmental Policy Commission (EPC) advises revising Alexandria's electric vehicle charging strategy given the changes in national policies and economics since the strategy's inception. We consider it important that the City reduce barriers to increased EV adoption in the City, and this revision could support such accelerated market transformation.

Transportation accounts for 36% of Alexandria's carbon emissions. The City's Environmental Action Plan 2040 (EAP2040) includes a section on "prioritizing low-carbon mobility options," and its Energy and Climate Change Action Plan (ECCAP) includes a strategy to "accelerate the deployment of electric and alternative fuel vehicles." Together, this sets an important stage for City leadership on decarbonizing transportation and specifically for focusing on increased adoption of electric vehicles.

The City's current EV strategy is anchored by its Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Readiness Strategy (EVRS), which was published in May 2021 and includes 31 recommendations that could result in a more effective increase of electric vehicle charging infrastructure. While a tremendous start, this strategy was set under a different federal administration and merits a revision given the changes in federal policy and overall energy economics of 2026.

One area in particular we are keen to support the City exploring is over-the sidewalk curbside EV charging. Alexandria's EV planning has acknowledged that residents without driveways or garages face a distinct charging-access challenge. Public charging remains an important part of the City's strategy, but it is not a complete substitute for home charging, particularly when residents must make repeated trips to charge vehicles that could otherwise charge while parked overnight. The aim would be to include a safe, practical pathway for residential curbside EV charging for households that lack usable off-street parking.

The EPC recommends that City Council direct staff to revise its EV charging strategy, including the development and piloting of a framework that allows residents, where site conditions permit, to connect residential EV charging equipment to a vehicle parked at the curb using an approved means of crossing the sidewalk. As part of this, City staff could incorporate: (1) an approved-equipment pathway for protected sidewalk crossings; (2) a lightweight residential permit for situations needing site-specific review; (3) a City-managed service for permanent flush crossings; and (4) whether existing publicly accessible EV charging authority can support an interim residential public-access license.

Additional details on how the City might consider crafting an over-the-sidewalk curbside EV charging pilot are provided in the Appendix of this Letter. Please us know if you would like to discuss further or have any questions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marta Schantz".

Marta Schantz, Chair
Alexandria Environmental Policy Commission

Appendix: Context and Considerations for an Alexandria Over-The-Sidewalk Curbside EV Charging Pilot

The Vision: Home charging should be available to residents without driveways where it can be provided safely. The need to cross a public sidewalk should not, by itself, make practical residential EV charging unavailable to an otherwise suitable household.

The Precedent: Peer cities are demonstrating that protected sidewalk crossings can be regulated safely. Nearby Fredericksburg has created a residential curbside charging pilot, and other jurisdictions - including Seattle, Portland, Oakland, Cambridge, and Washington, D.C. - have developed approaches for residential charging across or through the public right-of-way.

The Pilot: Alexandria could begin with simple, enforceable rules rather than unnecessary administrative burden. One practical near-term approach is a published “whitelist” of approved charging equipment and pedestrian cable protectors that may be used when defined site and safety conditions are satisfied. A lightweight permit program could accommodate locations requiring site-specific review.

The Technologies: A removable cable protector can provide a reasonable near-term solution, while a recessed or flush crossings could be the preferred long-term design where feasible. The City could work toward a standardized process for permanent crossings that minimizes changes in sidewalk level and reduces burden on pedestrians and charging households alike.

The City could design both short-term cable protector crossings and more permanent flush channel programs to limit the administrative burden for both residents and city staff, not just another permit program. However, we caution that the City’s EV charging strategy update ought not replace the “time tax” of trying to find charging solutions without a driveway, with a different burden of overcomplicated compliance. The “whitelist” cable protector strategy could solve this problem, and is patterned on similar strategies in DC, Seattle, and other peer cities.

For the long-term recessed channel pathway, a resident could be able to submit a straightforward request to the City. Staff could confirm site feasibility, utilities, sidewalk conditions, accessibility, and other constraints, then arrange installation through a standard City detail and approved contractor. A published resident fee, cost-sharing arrangement, or subsidy could be used as appropriate. This approach is patterned on a similar successful strategy implemented in the United Kingdom.

Alternatives: Staff could also examine whether Alexandria’s existing authority for publicly accessible EV charging equipment can support an interim residential public-access option. The City’s ordinance permits publicly accessible equipment, but the current licensing framework is designed around *commercial* vendors. Staff could consider whether a simplified residential license could allow homeowner-funded charging equipment that remains genuinely available to the public and does not reserve the adjacent parking space. Such an option would not replace a dedicated residential framework, but it could provide another near-term path while the City develops permanent policy.

Timing: It is not recommend that the City wait for a perfect permanent infrastructure solution before allowing any residential access. Residents are making vehicle-purchase decisions now, and lack of practical home charging can discourage EV adoption or force existing EV owners to rely on more expensive and time-intensive public charging. Alexandria can allow safe temporary crossings while simultaneously developing standardized permanent infrastructure.

The approach could allow safe residential charging now, keep administrative requirements proportionate to the risk, and move progressively toward better permanent infrastructure. For the protection and improvement of Alexandria’s environmental conditions for current and future Alexandrians, the Environmental Policy Commission supports adding residential curbside EV charging access to the City’s revised EV strategy.