

Wisconsin Environment Research & Policy Center, WISPIRG Foundation and Frontier Group: New electric vehicle toolkit for Wisconsin local governments shows how to act locally on cleaning up transportation

Posted on Wednesday, Nov 10, 2021

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As international leaders set global climate goals at COP26, toolkit offers solutions for Wisconsin cities and counties to act on back home

MADISON — As leaders from across the globe meet at the United Nations' COP26 conference on climate change this week, Wisconsin Environment Research & Policy Center, WISPIRG Foundation and Frontier Group are releasing a [new report](#) that shows how local governments in Wisconsin can pave the way for cleaner transportation through tools and policies that support the growing adoption of electric vehicles (EVs). With [transportation](#) being the number one source of global warming emissions in the United States and the second largest source in Wisconsin, transitioning to EVs must be a key part of any plan to reduce climate pollution and this toolkit offers a roadmap to reaching that goal.

“Even though more electric vehicles than ever are on the road, cities and counties need to step up their drive to get more Wisconsinites to come along for the ride,” said Wisconsin Environment State Director Megan Severson. “By taking the steps detailed in the toolkit, local governments across Wisconsin can energize their communities to make the switch to clean, electric vehicles.”

The toolkit highlights 20 tools and policies that leading cities have adopted to make it easier to buy and own an EV, including:

- Municipal purchase of EVs
- Expansion of EV charging infrastructure
- Electric buses and bikes
- EV-friendly building codes and zoning requirements
- Incentives to purchase EVs
- EV advocacy and resolutions

Cities in Wisconsin are already working to speed up the transition to EVs. Municipal leaders in Eau Claire, for example, developed the [Eau Claire Electric Vehicle Roadmap](#), which provides a detailed plan for how the city and residents can transition to zero emission transportation, including strategies for transitioning to electric buses, expanding EV charging infrastructure, and educating the public about EVs.

“Proper planning is absolutely critical so that electrical infrastructure upgrades and fleet purchases can be well coordinated over time,” said Ned Noel, senior planner for the City of Eau Claire. “This toolkit can assist communities to make the transition easier.”

By offering technical and policy support, experts and organizations across

Wisconsin are working closely with local leaders to help them set and implement their EV goals. For instance, researchers at UW Stevens Point's Center for Land Use Education recently authored a report [Ready for Electric Vehicles?](#), which details how communities can modify their local zoning ordinances to support EV growth.

"For local governments in Wisconsin, incorporating EV charging standards in zoning ordinances is one of the easiest and most affordable strategies to support EVs," said Lynn Markham, land use specialist with the Center for Land Use Education.

Commitments at the local level will also help Wisconsin reach [Gov. Tony Evers' goal](#) for the state to achieve 100% carbon-free electricity by 2050. Earlier this fall, Gov. Evers and the governors of four other Midwestern states created the [Regional Electric Vehicle \(REV\) Midwest Coalition](#), which will work to build a network of EV chargers across the region. And just last month, the state received a [\\$1 million grant](#) to accelerate electric vehicle adoption and charging infrastructure across the state.

"With these recent developments in mind, the EV toolkit will be instrumental in guiding local governments toward their electric vehicle adoption goals and, subsequently, move us closer to achieving Wisconsin's clean energy and climate goals," said Heather Allen, executive director for RENEW Wisconsin. "This is especially true as we move towards a cleaner grid and electrify our transportation sector."

The toolkit can also help prepare local government officials for federal investment in electric vehicles. Congress recently passed the bipartisan [Infrastructure and Investment Act](#), which will invest \$7.5 billion in grant money that local officials can apply for to expand EV charging stations in their communities. The complementary Build Back Better framework, which is still under consideration in Congress, would create new funding opportunities for electric vehicle purchasing incentives. To make the most of those investments, local governments will need to play a role in educating the public and in swiftly permitting new charging stations and infrastructure.

"Pollution from cars, trucks and buses makes us sick, hurting our lungs, hearts and overall health," said Mac Dressman, transportation associate with WISPIRG Foundation. "To clean the air in our communities, we have to take local action. Local leaders should prioritize electric vehicles to protect our health."