

Chatham County Receives Grant to Install Vehicle Fast Charging Station

By Administrator
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The NC Department of Environmental Quality (NC DEQ) selected Siler City as one of 33 locations across the state to receive grant funds to install a zero emission vehicle (ZEV) fast charging station.

Chatham County's project was chosen as part of a competitive grant application process designed to install fast charging stations for electric vehicles in strategically important travel corridors throughout the state. The grant will fund up to \$82,971 (about 80% of the cost) to install a fast charging station located in the Smithfield's Chicken 'N Bar-B-Q parking lot at the intersection of US Highway 64 and US Highway 421 in Siler City.

Governor Roy Cooper announced the grant awards on July 29, 2020, as part of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's settlement with Volkswagen for unlawfully cheating on vehicle emissions. Cooper designated NC DEQ to administer distribution of the settlement funds.

"Fast charging stations are important for zero emission vehicle adoption because they can charge a vehicle more rapidly, about 20-30 minutes, compared to a standard charger, which takes three or more hours," said Kevin Lindley, Chatham County Environmental Quality Director. "This charger will be strategically placed where drivers who stop to charge their vehicle will have several restaurants, stores, and medical offices available to them within walking distance. Having fast chargers along major travel corridors reduces 'range anxiety' and allows ZEV owners to more easily travel longer distances."

The charger will be available to the public 24 hours per day in a well-lit parking lot. It will have two dedicated parking spaces, and one vehicle will be able to charge at a time. The charger is internet connected, so ZEV owners will be able to download a phone app to check the station's availability, monitor their car's charging and to pay for a charge.

Chatham County has a Comprehensive Plan goal of becoming carbon negative, which means releasing less carbon into the atmosphere, e.g. through greenhouse gases like vehicle emissions, than can be absorbed by the environment. Based on data from two greenhouse gas inventories that were completed in 2010 and 2015, the largest greenhouse gas contributor in the county is vehicle emissions.

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“One of the goals in the Comprehensive Plan is to encourage zero emission vehicles by creating a countywide network of ZEV charging stations, and the fast charging station in Siler City will bring Chatham County one step closer to achieving this goal,” added Lindley.