

OFFICIALS LOOK TO GAUGE SUPPORT FOR ADDING ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING PORT DOWNTOWN

January 17, 2018 at 4:00 pm | By AUSTIN MONTGOMERY Staff writer



BDN file photo Alliant Energy Account Manager Bill Alt (left) passes a rebate check to Beloit Memorial Hospital Vice President Tom McCawley for installing an electric car charging station January 27, 2017. The rebate program is designed to incentivise the installation of the stations both at commercial and residential locations.

BELOIT - The City of Beloit is looking to gauge support for an additional electric vehicle charging port in the city, this time in the downtown area.

The city's internal, nine-member sustainability committee recently posted an online survey to determine if the public would support adding a vehicle charging port downtown.

Economic Development Director Andrew Janke said the committee would meet next month to go over survey results of the 10-question poll on electronic vehicle charging stations.

The city has identified multiple sites for a possible charging port including at City Hall, the Mill Street municipal parking lot, Ironworks campus, Broad Street parking lot and Heritage View parking lot.

Beloit currently has one, dual-charging station at Beloit Memorial Hospital. The dual-port option at the hospital was unveiled in January 2017, with the hospital being one of the first Rock County businesses to receive an Alliant Energy \$1,500 rebate for installing the port.

Janke, who chairs the sustainability committee, said the decision to jump start electric vehicle options was prompted after staff had brought the issue forward.

"We are trying to gauge what the interest would be," Janke said. "This would be important to us because we could track the usage of the port and build from experience for future placements."

Preliminary estimates show the city could install a dual-charging port for \$14,279, of which the total cost could be met through a grant or private funds. If no alternate funding is available, the city could include the project in a future capital improvement budget.

Janke said he placed a request with an unnamed private entity to fund the effort, noting that it wouldn't be impossible for the city to get the charging station at no cost to the city in 2018. If public funding was needed, Janke said, the city could see the port established in 2019.

The city's interest in electric vehicle options comes amid an ever-changing automotive climate. In October 2017, General Motors announced it would be adding two electric models in 2018 and 18 additional models by 2023.

"We need to try and stay current with what's happening," Janke said. "Whether the market demand is there, companies have said they will build more electric cars. That will show a need for charging stations."

At the state level, Wisconsin legislators approved a \$100 annual surcharge for electric vehicles in September 2017, collected with annual registration fees. The bid was supported by Gov. Scott Walker.