

To:	Warden Milne and Members of Grey County Council
Committee Date:	January 25, 2024
Subject / Report No:	CAOR-CW-02-24
Title:	Rural Recharge – January 2024 Update
Prepared by:	Rebecca Danard
Reviewed by:	Randy Scherzer
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	All
Status:	

Recommendation

1. That Report CAOR-CW-02-24 be received regarding an update on the Regional Electric Vehicle Charging Network Partnership project now called Rural Recharge; and
2. That staff be directed to work with the successful third-party implementation company (Ivy Network) on applying for funding through the MTO’s ChargeON process to add a Level 3 fast charger on the Grey Gables site (206 Toronto Street South, Markdale); and
3. That an agreement be brought forward for Council’s consideration should the funding be received through the MTO’s ChargeON program.

Executive Summary

Rural ReCharge is a collaboration between Grey, Bruce, Dufferin, Wellington, Huron, and Perth Counties to expand the availability of public EV charging infrastructure in our region. The steering committee, made up of staff from all participating Counties, collectively procured a consultant (Community Energy Associates) and a third-party implementation partner company (Ivy Network) through an RFP process. Ivy will install, operate and maintain this network of chargers. Aside from access to the land and routine maintenance of the site, there is no cost or responsibility required of the owner of the lands.

Ivy will be applying for the MTO ChargeON funding (due January 31, 2024) to support this project. Sites have been identified by the project consultant and Ivy Network, and have been supported in principle by the municipalities (or private landowners) in Georgian Bluffs, Grey Highlands, Meaford, Owen Sound, Southgate, The Blue Mountains, and West Grey. A Site Access Verification Form submitted with the application will indicate the municipalities intention to allow Ivy to install the chargers at these locations subject to entering into an agreement with Ivy Network. Ivy will cover 50% of the project costs and apply to the MTO for the other 50%.

Once funding is conditionally approved, Ivy will seek to enter into a formal agreement with the landowner (County, municipality, or private landowner) confirming the site and the terms of service.

Background and Discussion

About Rural ReCharge

The Regional EV Network Partnership Project, now called Rural ReCharge, is a collaboration between Grey, Bruce, Dufferin, Wellington, Huron, and Perth Counties to expand the availability of public EV charging infrastructure in our region. The goal of the project is to fill gaps in existing infrastructure with a coordinated strategy, rather than a piecemeal approach of adding chargers one by one over time. The steering committee, made up of staff from all participating Counties, collectively procured a consultant: Community Energy Associates (CEA) through an RFP process. With support from CEA, the steering committee then procured a third-party implementation partner company through an RFP process to own and operate the network and complete relevant funding applications to support the installation (Ivy Network).

The Sites

Grey County and the project partners started a collaboration in 2021 to establish an EV charging station network that would bridge the gap between Highway 401, Lake Huron, Georgian Bay and the Bruce Peninsula. The Regional EV Charging Network Strategy identified 17 community locations as a baseline network, with the intention of expanding the network in the future. Since 2021, some sites were added because of additional capacity and others were dropped because another organization put in chargers. The strategy of filling the gaps in existing infrastructure has remained the goal of this project.

In each case, several locations within each community were considered for the chargers. Ivy has selected their preferred locations based on proximity to nearby amenities, natural dwell time, proximity to natural travel patterns, accessibility of parking, availability of power, and satisfying a charging need. Municipal staff at the member municipalities have reviewed and approved all the locations on municipally owned land. Ivy is connecting directly with the private landowners where applicable.

Table 1: Proposed charging sites

Charger	Address	Municipality	Owner	Potential Financing
Level 3	185 George Street West, Durham	West Grey	Municipality	Ivy/MTO
Level 3	Flesherton (site to be determined)	Grey Highlands	Municipal or Private	Ivy/MTO

Level 3	206 Toronto St S, Markdale (confirmation pending from County)	Grey Highlands	County	Ivy/MTO
Level 3	15 Arthur Street, Thornbury	The Blue Mountains	Municipality	Ivy/MTO
Level 3	1900 3rd Av E, Owen Sound (confirmation pending from Municipality)	Owen Sound	Municipality	Ivy/MTO
Level 2 & 3	177964 Grey Road 18, Springmount	Georgian Bluffs	Municipality	Georgian Bluffs/MTO
Level 2 & 3	550 Princess St, Shallow Lake	Georgian Bluffs	Municipality	Georgian Bluffs/MTO
Level 2	22 Trowbridge Street E, Meaford	Meaford	Municipality	Ivy/MTO
Level 2	Dundalk (site to be determined)	Southgate	Private	Ivy/MTO

The site plans for the chargers have not yet been developed, this will happen at a later stage of the project. The sites identified for Level 2 chargers will have 2-8 charger ports, while the Level 3 chargers will have one charge port. The chargers will be installed where there is easy access to a power supply and minimal disruption to the site in consultation with the landowner. They will also be in locations that are already maintained (e.g., snow cleared in the winter) by the municipality/landowner, so no additional service should be needed. The municipalities will have the opportunity to provide feedback and approve the site plans before installation begins.

Project Financing

Ivy will be responsible for all costs associated with installing the chargers (including any electric upgrades to support the installation) and will also be responsible for the costs to continue to maintain and operate the chargers. The public using the chargers would pay directly at the charging stations with payment going directly to Ivy to recuperate the installation and maintenance costs for the chargers. The chargers will have a separate meter (attached to the grid, not a municipal panel) and the electricity costs would be paid by Ivy. No financial contribution is required from the municipality for this application, or at any time in the future.

By providing access to the land for Ivy to install the charger, the municipality will benefit from the increased attraction of people to the area who will patronize local businesses and create economic development. The municipality would enter a 5-year agreement that would allow Ivy to operate the chargers on municipal land. Ivy is currently finalizing a draft agreement that will be reviewed by the municipalities and, if agreeable, would be brought back to County Council for approval.

The sites in Georgian Bluffs are an exception. In this phase of the project, the project goals are to achieve maximum coverage of the region with the minimum number of chargers. Several

communities who would benefit from additional charging infrastructure were not included because coverage was achieved by chargers in nearby communities. The chargers planned for Owen Sound and Wiarton, meant that Springmount and Shallow Lake were not initially selected for chargers. However, Georgian Bluffs had already planned to install chargers at these locations and wanted the benefits of being part of this project. For these sites only, the municipality is putting forward some of the capital costs to install the chargers. Once the chargers are installed, they will operate like all the other Rural ReCharge sites, with no ongoing costs, responsibilities or revenues going to the municipality.

MTO ChargeON Funding

The steering committee recommends that the MTO ChargeON funding opportunity be considered to support this regional network of EV chargers. Important features of this funding:

1. Applications are processed on a per-site basis. Each location requires a separate application.
2. Applications are due January 31, 2024.

Although MTO will fund a higher percentage of the project (75% vs. 50%) if municipalities apply directly, there is a significant drawback to this approach. If a municipality applies, they must own and operate the charger for a minimum of 5 years after installation. This would include the costs and administrative burden of providing power for the charger, collecting charging fees, insurance, repairs and maintenance, and reporting to the MTO. This is not aligned with the values of this project. Therefore, Ivy will apply for the funding on behalf of the project and manage all these details.

A council resolution is not required by the MTO for the funding application. At this time municipalities will only need to provide a Site Access Verification Form. This gives the applicant (Ontario Charging Network – aka Ivy) approval to install infrastructure at the site, “conditional upon the MTO and the Applicant entering into an Agreement.” Before entering into an agreement with the MTO, Ivy will have a comprehensive agreement in place with the municipality/landowner. If Ivy and the municipality/landowner cannot come to terms for whatever reason (e.g., site plan problems, change of direction from the municipality/landowner, lack of support from Council, etc.) then Ivy would not enter into an agreement with MTO, even if funding were offered. Although it is not the preferred option, until funding is offered and an agreement is in place, the municipality can withdraw from the project at any time for any reason.

Because the MTO funding is per site, it is probable that not all the sites proposed by this project (~30 sites across 6 Counties) will be funded. If a site does not receive MTO funding, there are several alternative options that could be considered:

- It could be built anyway, with Ivy absorbing 100% of the installation costs (subject to entering into an agreement with the municipality/landowner),
- Ivy could apply for the federal ZEVIP funding, currently scheduled to open in spring 2024 - this alternative option is most likely if few sites are funded by MTO, as the project would require additional federal funding to achieve the project goals; however, this would delay installation for sites dependent on the timing of the ZEVIP funding, or
- The site might be no longer needed - this would occur if the MTO funds a different project near the site, making the site redundant.

Timelines and Agreements

This section provides information about the agreements and roles established during this project.

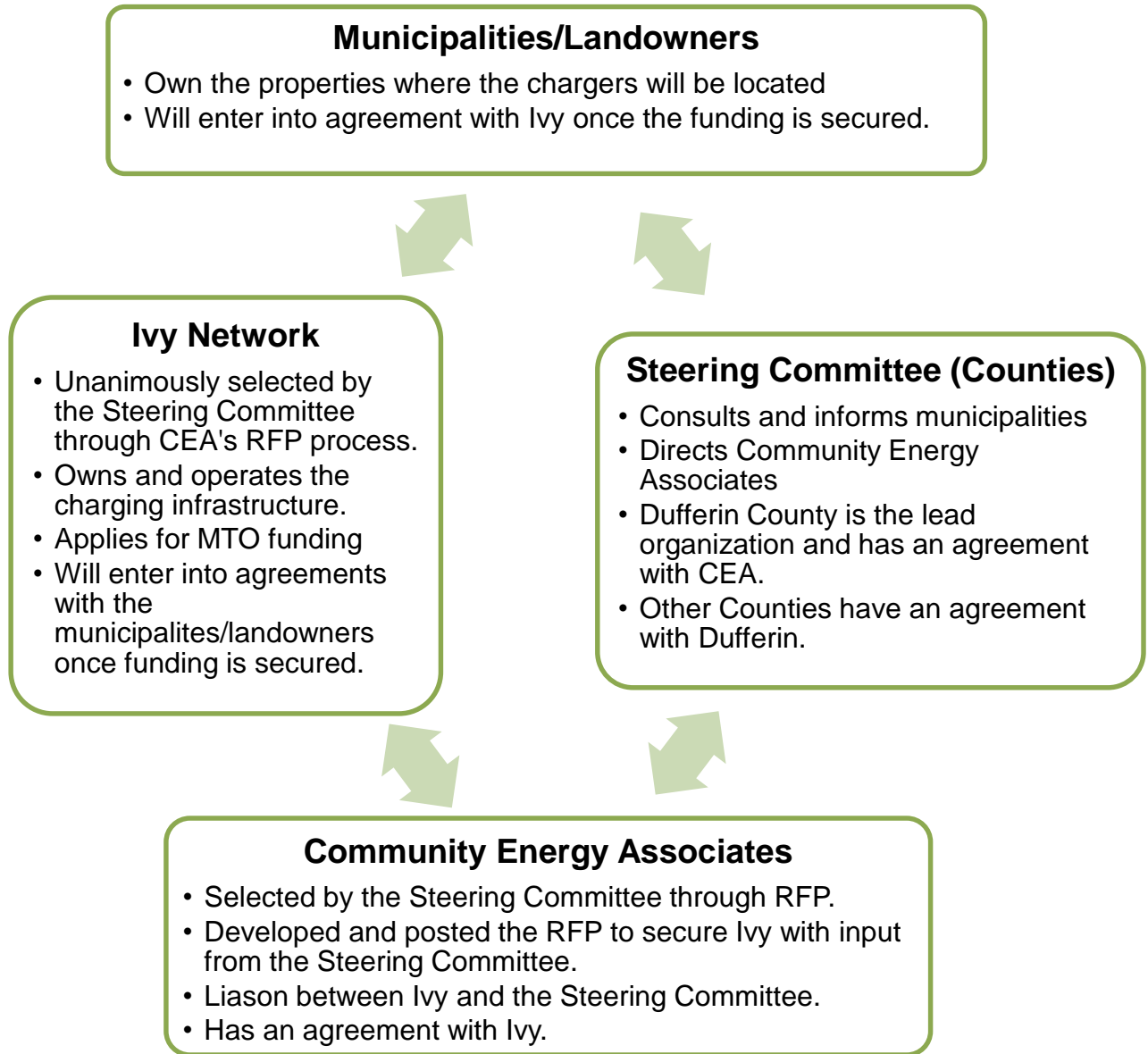


Figure 1: Roles in the Rural Recharge project

Table 2: Timeframe of Project agreements

Timeframe	Agreements
October 2022	The Steering Committee developed an RFP to secure Community Energy Associates (CEA). This was led by Dufferin County. Grey County has an MOU with Dufferin County describing our support for engaging CEA.
January-February 2023	CEA led the process of creating and posting an RFP to secure a third-party implementation partner company. This was posted on Bids and Tenders from January 15, 2023 - February 17, 2023 and received three submissions. The Steering Committee provided input into the RFP creation and reviewed all of the bids submitted. Ivy Network was unanimously selected. Because CEA posted the RFP, they hold the agreement with Ivy.
January 2024	Ivy is seeking funding from MTO to support this project. Municipalities complete the Site Access Verification Form required by the application.
Spring 2024	<p>MTO offers conditional funding to Ivy to support building chargers at some or all the sites.</p> <p>Ivy and the municipalities enter into an agreement confirming the site and the terms of service.</p> <p>Ivy confirms with the MTO which sites are moving forward. Ivy will not accept MTO or other funding until an agreement with the property owner is in place.</p>

Financial and Resource Implications

Grey County’s total cost for the Regional EV Charging Network Partnership project (Rural Recharge) to date has been \$9,578 along with in-kind staff resources to help support the project. This contribution could lead to the installation and on-going maintenance of a total of 7 - Level 3 Chargers and 12 or more – Level 2 chargers being added throughout Grey County at no further cost to the County or local municipalities. On average, a Level 3 charger costs \$100,000 to \$200,000 per port and a Level 2 charger costs \$10,000 per port. The estimated total investment of \$1,170,000 could be realized through the Rural Recharge project. The exact total investment will depend on the total number and type of charger approved by the MTO and the landowner.

Relevant Consultation

Internal: Finance, Purchasing, Clerks, Long-Term Care

AODA Compliance (describe)

Contribution to Climate Change Action Plan Targets (describe)

Rural Recharge will support the Community Action 7 – encourage the adoption of electric vehicles which is one of the 5 Key Next Steps identified in Going Green in Grey.

External: Local Municipalities, Community Energy Associates (project consultant) and Ivy Network (implementation company)

Appendices and Attachments

1. CAOR-CW-02-24 Rural Recharge Potential EV Charger Locations
2. CAOR-CW-02-24 Electric Vehicle Charging Station Memorandum of Understanding