Volta Chargers at Amazon Fresh

Photo by David Dreyfuss/Post by Barry Kresch

Update:

These chargers have been ordered removed. The site has been approved for chargers but not the signage.

How Did That Happen?

Volta is a company that installs charging stations at their own expense at highly trafficked locations which are free to users. These chargers are at the site of the former Barnes and Noble on Post Road East in Westport, now being renovated as an Amazon supermarket due to open later this year.

Volta chargers have large screens that display digital advertising. Its business model is that the advertising covers the cost of installation and power, plus earns a profit. The business benefits from having this amenity (and Amazon has made sustainability a corporate focus). Volta chargers typically have J1772 connectors.

While we always welcome EV charging stations, the odd thing about this is that a proposed Volta installation just down the road at Stop and Shop was nixed by Westport Planning and Zoning, the reason being that the video display was non-conforming signage. Do they think these will remain invisible?

Volta chargers can be found at the new upscale mall, The Sono Collection, in Norwalk. Malls and supermarkets are ideal locations from Volta's perspective with people constantly coming and going, the better to bulk up the number of advertising exposures. The chargers are placed in a prominent location, not ancillary parking. Volta has a master agreement

with Stop and Shop to install chargers at a number of their locations, including 2 locations in Norwalk.

Just don't try and sneak in for a charge after hours. They typically turn off the units when the business is not open. Operating hours can generally be found on the PlugShare app. These chargers are not yet listed because they are not yet live.

Keeping It Zero On The Road

Net-Zero Hotel Marcel Gets Electric Shuttle Bus

Ensconced under the solar canopy in the photo, in front of level 2 J-1772 chargers, is an electric shuttle van from Maxwell. The shuttle seats 14, including the driver. This is a battery electric van, i.e. 100% electric. Maxwell has been manufacturing these at its Southern California facility since 2019. It sports a 74 kWh battery, a range of 150 miles, and can take a DC fast charge using a CCS connector.

It is owned by the recently opened net-zero Hotel Marcel, and is ready to provide guests with an emission-free and quiet ride to downtown New Haven, the Yale campus, Tweed Airport, or the nearby Amtrak station. The hotel can use it to transport wedding parties, and it has the range to reach Westchester and Bradley Airports.

Electric vans are projected to be a high-growth segment. Amazon has ordered 100,000 delivery vans from Rivian. FedEx is testing 150 electric delivery vans in Los Angeles, purchased

from BrightDrop (General Motors.) There are reportedly around a half-million of this category of passenger van, now ripe for moving to electric.

The existing, quaint rules need updating. As part of the registration process, the vehicle had to pass an emissions test.

We are not aware of any other electric shuttle vans in the state. If you know of any, please tell us in the comments.

Hotel Marcel Cluster of EV Chargers

The photo above is the solar canopy in the parking lot of the net zero Hotel Marcel in the Long Wharf area of New Haven. The newly opened hotel, powered by solar panels on the canopies and the roof of the building, is soon to be home to one of the newest clusters of EV chargers in the state.

There are 12 Tesla Superchargers, along with EVConnect level-2 chargers with J1772 connectors. The initial level-2 installation will be 10 level-2 ports (5 dual port units), eventually growing to 30 ports. The infrastructure for the expansion is already in place.

The level 2 chargers are under the canopy. The Superchargers are close to the canopy. Basically, whomever plugs in will have a sheltered walk to the front door of the hotel. The chargers are located at the far end of the lot to discourage ICEing.

The units are not live as of this writing. There is a “splice

box” that has yet to arrive for the transformer. It is hoped that the units will be online by mid-August but we’ll publish updates as more information becomes available. We are waiting for the chargers to come online to schedule a planned EV Club meeting at this facility.

There are also 2 level-2 ChargePoint chargers just a few feet away near the entrance to Ikea. These are in operation.

Level 3 Utility Incentives Fully Subscribed For Cycle One

Applicants Will Have To Wait

Good news/bad news. Demand is strong but the funding isn’t there to fully meet it.

A crush of applications for incentives for DC Fast Chargers, the high-powered chargers that can recharge an EV to 80% inside of 30 minutes, most frequently located along highway corridors, has caused the program run by Eversource and United Illuminating to become fully subscribed just six months after its inauguration. This is a 9-year program that runs in three 3-year cycles. So the funds depletion could last until 2025.

Eversource and UI have requested additional funds, so there could be funds available sooner, but it is too soon to know details. Eversource and UI advise that if you had planned to submit an application to follow through with that submission. They continue to evaluate applications and this will establish

your place in the queue.

There is still a substantial amount of funding available for level 2 (240 volt) chargers and grants are being made on an ongoing basis.

This does not affect the residential incentives program (which does not included DCFC).

CHEAPR Follow-UP

The increase in the MSRP cap is fully implemented. Vehicles with an MSRP of up to $50,000 are now rebate-eligible.

There are some vehicles that are eligible that are not yet on the list of eligible vehicles on the DEEP website. We have gotten a few inquiries about the Ioniq 5 in particular. DEEP is aware of that one and it will be added soon. If you are shopping for an EV and you don’t see it included where you think it should be, let us know and we’ll pass the info along. This applies not only to newly introduced models but also a new model year of an existing vehicle.

The Stealth Patrol – EVs for Police

Post by Barry Kresch

Top photo courtesy of the Boulder County Sheriff’s Department

Police Look to EVs for Fuel Savings and Performance

The public safety world is on a roll when it comes to electrification. Drive Electric Colorado hosted a virtual panel this week about the electrification of police vehicles and got 138 attendees, indicative of the high level of interest.

Along with yours truly, the panelists were Chief Foti Koskinas and Officer Charles Sampson from Westport, Chief Robert Kalamaris of Fairfield, Detective Sergeant Clay Leak of the Boulder County Sheriff's Office in CO, and Chief Jeff Christiansen of Linn Creek, MO (near the Lake of the Ozarks). Sgt. Leak and I were the ones who have been compiling data, while the others spoke of their purchase, customization, and service use experiences. Boulder has acquired a Tesla Model Y. Linn Creek has a Tesla Model 3.

Westport Acquires Third Tesla Patrol Car

Westport, of course, was an early adopter, having purchased a Tesla Model 3 in 2019, followed by a Model Y in 2021 (which is still in the customization process but should be entering service in July), and, drumroll, the town has purchased a second Model Y. This brings the total number of plug-in vehicles in the Police Fleet to to 7. Chief Foti said that the police department has decreased its gasoline consumption by 18% over the past 7 years as a result of incorporating electric vehicles and more fuel-efficient ICE vehicles, such as the Ford Interceptor Hybrid. Emergency Medical Services in Westport are run by the police and they are looking into an electric ambulance.

Westport was the first department to enter into an NDA with

Tesla so that they and their vendors could work with Tesla to do some recoding to take advantage of the native tech and wire most of the accessories directly into the large battery. Unlike some other departments, they did not need to add a second 12-volt battery for this purpose. Due to this, Westport had an easier time with the law enforcement customization than the others, but growing pains are part of the game. It was mentioned that Tesla has now created an internal team devoted to law enforcement so perhaps others will be going this route as well.

The Model Y is a pricier option than the Model 3. The advantages cited were the extra room for drivers, cargo, a prisoner cage, and the higher ground clearance. At 6.6 inches, it isn't that high but a bit more than an inch higher than the 3. Regarding the cargo area, the car was praised for its efficient use of space with the trunk, sub-trunk, and frunk.

Westport has a municipal directive to buy electric whenever suitable vehicles are available. Not an ordinance, but it gets the job done.

There were some complaints about having enough seat room for fully equipped officers, though not that severe. On the other hand, most of the officers were blown away by how much fun the vehicle is to drive.

It was mentioned by the officers on the panel that several members of their respective forces bought an EV for personal use after having had the chance to drive the Tesla at work.

Which EVs Could Be Patrol Cars

While all of the panelists were pleased with the performance of their Teslas, coupled with its high safety rating, robust charging network, and 8 year/100,000 mile battery/powertrain warranty, there were several other options that were in the consideration set.

- Ford Mustang Mach-E – $56K for the 270 mile range AWD model
- Rivian R1S – Range of 260 – 320+ (according to the Rivian website) and starting at $72.5K
- Audi e-tron – 222 mile range, $67K for base AWD model
- Jaguar I-PACE – 234 mile range, $70K for base AWD model
- Ford F150 Lightning – 4 trim levels starting anywhere from $40K – $91K. Range from 230 – 320 miles.

Community Relations

The Teslas have been an astounding success in terms of community relations. Chief Foti expounded on this for the EV Club when he spoke to us a couple of years ago, informing us that he has received hundreds of inquiries from all over the world. Detective Sgt. Leak of Boulder, in his presentation, described their Model Y as a "great success, huge ice-breaker, tons of community engagement." They put a QR code on the car which takes people to an informational website. It is a little hard to see, but the QR code is visible in the photo on the bottom right. It is at the rear of the vehicle to the right of the license plate.

Concluding thoughts

- Adopting EVs is proving to be a rousing success for police departments around the country.
- The Teslas have been a huge hit. Other vehicles are in the pipeline and it will be interesting to see the comparative reports going forward.
- Going electric, just like with consumers, has a higher acquisition cost but saves money. That is punctuated with gas prices at current levels.
- Hybrids are also a money-saving option, but not to the same degree as electric. And they, like any ICE, will spend more time out of service than an EV.

- There are other police use cases besides patrol vehicles and an array of available vehicles that can be matched as appropriate.
- The community relations aspect has proven to be an unplanned benefit.

More photos of the Boulder MY below. We'll publish photos of the Westport vehicle and hopefully video as well.

Time To Register For Utility

Incentives

Registration Flow Fixes Made

If you have been thinking of registering your EV or charger for the incentives offered through Eversource and United Illuminating, but have been hesitant due to reports of the not-ready-for-prime-time registration funnel, the corrective website development work has been finished and it should be good to go, whether registering a new charger or going the telematics route.

As reported to us by Eversource and UI (the EDCs, a.k.a. utilities) early in the year, due to the finalization of the program occurring around Thanksgiving of 2021, and its starting point of January 1, 2022, there was insufficient time to properly build out the website. This is further complicated by there being 3 parties involved as the EDCs outsource the management of the program. After they presented to the club in January, a number of members tried to register regardless and encountered all sorts of adventures, including finding themselves on an out of state EDC website.

If you register, you will notice that you will be taken from the EDC domain to an EDC subdomain on the vendor's domain. Your EDC account number will serve to link you. Pro tip – when you enter the account number, don't leave spaces. If you do, the registration won't take and the site isn't clear regarding what isn't working.

Have a graphic of your vehicle registration for uploading.

Keep in mind the charger incentives apply only to approved charger units and, similarly, telematics applies to approved vehicles. See this page, which has info for both Eversource and UI.

Feel free to let us know about your experiences. We can forward reports of issues to the EDCs.

This takes you to Eversource Connected Solutions. This is the page for UI residential.

EVolunteers Requested

EV Drivers Could Relieve the Burden of High Gas Prices in Delivering Food to the Needy

Food Rescue US is an organization that reduces food insecurity by transferring excess food from grocers and restaurants to social service agencies that feed people in need.

Using an app, volunteer drivers “rescue” food from donors. A typical rescue takes 30 minutes to an hour.

The problem in our time of burdensome inflation is that the organization has been losing volunteers due to the expenses caused by record high gas prices. EVs can affordably fill the bill.

Food Rescue US is active in Fairfield, Litchfield, and New London Counties, as well as West Hartford.

Arrangements are flexible and volunteers can make as few or as many trips as they choose. If anyone can spare some time to

help the hungry, please register at this link: https://bit.ly/EVfoodres

Your time and good will is appreciated!

New Level 3 Chargers Coming to Highway Service Areas This Summer

Godot Is Soon To Arrive

This is the level 3 version of a post about out-of-service level 2 chargers from April 21st.

Level 3 chargers have been sitting lonely, forlornly, and non-functionally at several of the service areas on our major highways. And its been that way for roughly 4 years. We now have the background and going forward plans. This post refers to the non-Tesla chargers.

The chargers at the service centers we are aware of, specifically the I-95 service center in Darien and the Merritt Parkway northbound service center in Greenwich, were originally installed by Eversource/DEEP working with the Department of Transportation in 2016. They have been out of service ("decommissioned") since 2018. I'm sure there is detail we don't know since those chargers were barely ever operational.

New Level 3 Fast Charger Installations

The state leases the service centers to a company called Project Service, LLC, based in New Haven, which also manages them. PS responded to our inquiry, saying that they are working with a new partner to install new DCFC equipment at their plazas. There are 6 sites where work is underway and installation is expected to be complete sometime during this summer. The 6 service areas are I-95 Fairfield (both directions), I-95 Madison (both directions), Merritt Parkway New Canaan (southbound), and Merritt Parkway Greenwich (northbound).

There are also Tesla chargers at PS service centers. These have been operational and are in the process of being upgraded.

DOT Survey

A larger, separate initiative, deploying the funding that is coming from the federal infrastructure legislation is being managed by the Department of Transportation and is in the planning stages. These funds are going to support level 3 chargers along major highway corridors. Public input is being sought as plans are further developed. There is currently a survey live on their website here. (It is a very high-level survey that takes 2 minutes.) The link will remain live through June 3rd.

SB-4 Would Raise CHEAPR MSRP Cap

Omnibus Transportation and Energy Committee Bill Includes Support for EVs

Aside from SB-214 that would enable direct EV sales, there was another significant bill that advanced to the full chamber in SB-4 which passed by a committee vote of 23 – 11.

CHEAPR

Changes to the state EV purchase-incentive program, CHEAPR, are one aspect of the bill.

- The MSRP cap for eligible vehicles is raised to $50,000.
- The budget of the program is being increased, though an exact amount is not specified.
- Changes are coming to incentives designed for income-limited individuals that will broaden eligibility and raise the incentive. The current formulation has had a very low take-rate. If a way can be a found so that it can be cash on the hood as is the case with the standard incentive, that would also help. There are incentives for both new and used EVs.
- There will be an e-bike incentive of $500 for individuals who are income-limited or live in an environmental justice community. Eligible bikes have a price cap of $2000. (There is some discussion regarding whether that cap is unrealistically low.)
- Currently, CHEAPR incentives are only available to residents. This bill expands it to include businesses, municipalities, non-profits, and tribal entities. It

entitles them to up to 10 rebates in a single year with a total cap of 20.
- The CHEAPR Board is changing. The specifics of who is eligible to be appointed are being modified. The board is losing some agency and becomes an advisory board.

DEEP released a discouraging stat that only 34% of eligible vehicles are being sold with a rebate. This number starts with June of 2021, so the lifetime cap would not be an issue. There could be a few reasons for this, but at the risk of being IFO, this is a point of sale rebate and the point of sale is the dealership. According to the Center for Sustainable Energy, the consultant that runs the program for DEEP, Tesla has the rebate integrated into its checkout flow. The dealers should do the same, and in general be more proactive about educating customers about the program.

These are some of the other items in SB-4:

- Right to charge language that would make it easier for residents of multi-unit dwellings to be permitted to install a charger.
- A requirement that any state funded project not contribute to emissions, either directly or via an offset.
- Mandates to increase the electrification of the state vehicle fleet until it covers 100% of the fleet by 2030.
- Funding for the installation of EV charging stations in the rural areas of the state that are not likely to benefit from the Infrastructure Bill funding, which focuses on major highway corridors.
- School bus contracts would be permitted to be extended to 10 years from the current 5, making the numbers pencil out for electric.
- A prohibition on purchasing/leasing diesel transit buses beginning in 2024.

Passing out of committee is just the first step. However, SB-4 has 56 sponsors and is thought to have a high likelihood of becoming law.

Direct Sales Bill Passes Out of Committee

SB-214 Passes with 21 Votes

SB-214 has passed the Transportation Committee by a vote of 21-14. To see how individual members voted, check out the tally on the committee website.

Legislators are offered time to comment before the vote is taken and several took the opportunity.

Representative Devin Carney (R) (Ranking Member), who is a no vote, said that there is no longer a need because dealerships are now selling EVs, a change from several years ago. He opined that Tesla is a legitimate company, but that other, newer entrants like Rivian and Lucid, with their difficulties in ramping production, are not, and thus do not deserve this "carve-out." He also objected to characterizations made of the legacy companies that they don't care about the environment, and cited some of the challenges of sourcing the materials necessary for battery manufacturing from places like the

Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Representative Jonathan Steinberg (D), a longtime supporter of direct sales, said this year's bill was an improvement over past bills. (The bill is restricted to battery electric vehicles and is no longer just a Tesla bill). Steinberg notes that the dealers say that direct sales will hurt their businesses but that the data from states where direct sales is legal just don't support that conclusion. He thinks the entire auto purchasing relational experience will change, that it's about competitiveness, and that this bill supports consumer choice. Interestingly, he said that he would support a bill that goes further than this one and do away with the franchise laws entirely.

Representative Stephen Meskers (D) said he was a yes because "at some level, the markets should decide." His main concern was about whether this would extract profits from the state and vowed to engage with Tesla and the other companies to push them to maximize their investment in CT, including vocational-technical training.

Senator Henri Martin (R), voting no, complained that he doesn't understand why this bill keeps coming back year after year. He feels that this bill does not protect consumers, questions whether there will be adequate servicing facilities, and that it comes down to having two sets of laws.

The actual committee vote was more bipartisan than the above comments might indicate. However, as best we know, last year there were no Republican votes in the Senate for this bill (since the bill didn't get called, there was no recorded vote). That is something we hope to see change.

Bills similar to SB-214 have made it out of committee in the past but haven't made it across the finish line. The Senate is the next stop for SB-214.

We think that Representative Steinberg is spot on. This

industry is changing but it needs to change faster. Consumers overwhelmingly support this legislation. Now is the time to tell your legislators that you support the free-market and consumer choice, and that the current, antiquated laws are holding back EV adoption.

You can use this page to find your state senator and representative.