THE MULTIFAMILY CHARGING GAP:

Making EVs Work for Urban Residents

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Elaine Buckberg
Senior Fellow, Salata Institute for Climate and Sustainability and Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard University

Laila Ale
Affiliated Researcher, Salata Institute for Climate and Sustainability, Harvard University



THE SALATA INSTITUTE
FOR CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY
at Harvard University

1. Executive Summary

This report addresses a single question: how to bring electric vehicle (EV) charging to the tens of millions of Americans who live in multifamily housing—from renters to condo, townhome and co-op owners. For these residents, one of the biggest barriers to going electric is not buying the vehicle, but the absence of a convenient and affordable place to plug in. And that barrier is highest in the densest cities, where apartment living is most common and where charging is typically hardest to build.

Home charging is rare today at multifamily buildings, and often difficult for a resident to arrange—that's the charging gap. Single-family homeowners with dedicated parking can typically call an electrician and promptly install a charger in their garage or driveway, although doing so may involve some electrical upgrade, and then home charge at residential electricity rates. For multifamily residents, buying an EV involves figuring out where to charge and how much it will cost. If chargers are not already in place at the building, arranging one is often complicated because multifamily housing residents do not control their parking lot or garage, nor their building's electrical infrastructure, and relying on public chargers typically involves paying a premium over residential electricity rates.

This report identifies the most powerful levers to enable charging at multifamily buildings or at convenient neighborhood locations. The ideas here leverage stakeholder interviews and a July 2026 workshop that brought together governments of the largest U.S. cities, large multifamily housing developers, utilities, charge point operators (CPOs), and state officials to explore how to accelerate deployment of EV charging at multifamily buildings and at convenient locations nearby. All these stakeholders can play a part in improving charging access for multifamily residents.

Although the paper describes multifamily residents as a group, the strategies and tools described here can be combined and adapted for each type of multifamily housing, from landlord-owned rental apartments to resident-owned condos and coops, and for new developments and retrofits.

Section 2 explains why charging access matters and today's challenges holding back multifamily charging, from the retrofit economics of existing buildings to pricing that will determine charger usage. Section 3 maps out opportunities and solutions that each of cities, utilities, multifamily property owners (both landlords and condominiums/co-ops), charging providers, state governments, and public utility commissions can implement. Strategies for each stakeholder group are followed by examples of real-world implementations. A summary of key themes closes the report in Section 4. **Employing these strategies and forging collaborations across stakeholders can speed deployment of chargers** that conveniently and affordably serve multifamily residents, **and start closing the charging gap.**

1.1. Key Takeaways

For housing owners and managers:

- Evaluate charging as a capital investment, not just as an amenity, measuring leasing, NOI, property value, and retention.
- Take advantage of free financial models to assess charger investments and test revenue models.
- Use submetering to make it easier to track and recover charging costs.
- Consider automated load management to avoid electrical upgrades or limit upgrade costs.

For city governments:

- Make charger permit applications fast and easy—online, quick turnaround, default to approval.
- Adopt EV-ready building codes for new multifamily construction; consider including major alterations of existing buildings.
- Reform zoning to allow standalone charging hubs.
- Create a clear pathway for privately-installed curbside charging.
- Pass right-to-charge ordinances.

For utilities:

- Anticipate and prepare for EV charging demand.
- Offer make-ready programs that fund the electrical work up to the charger and capitalize behind-the-meter equipment where the regulator allows.
- Allow managed charging and smart breakers to share capacity and avoid stranded investment.
- Consider owning and operating charging in underserved areas so that no community is left behind.

For charging point operators (CPOs):

- Target neighborhoods with high multifamily shares, including areas with many rideshare and independent taxi drivers.
- Partner with cities, utilities, property owners, and local businesses to identify convenient charging locations and reduce deployment barriers.
- For curbside Level 2 chargers, use existing power sources to reduce costs and speed installation.

For state legislatures, state energy and environmental agencies, public utility commissions:

- Fund charging in neighborhoods underserved by the market, directing rebate and infrastructure dollars specifically to Level 2 charging at existing urban multifamily buildings.
- Provide predictable funding for projects with long development and construction timelines.
- Back right-to-charge laws statewide.

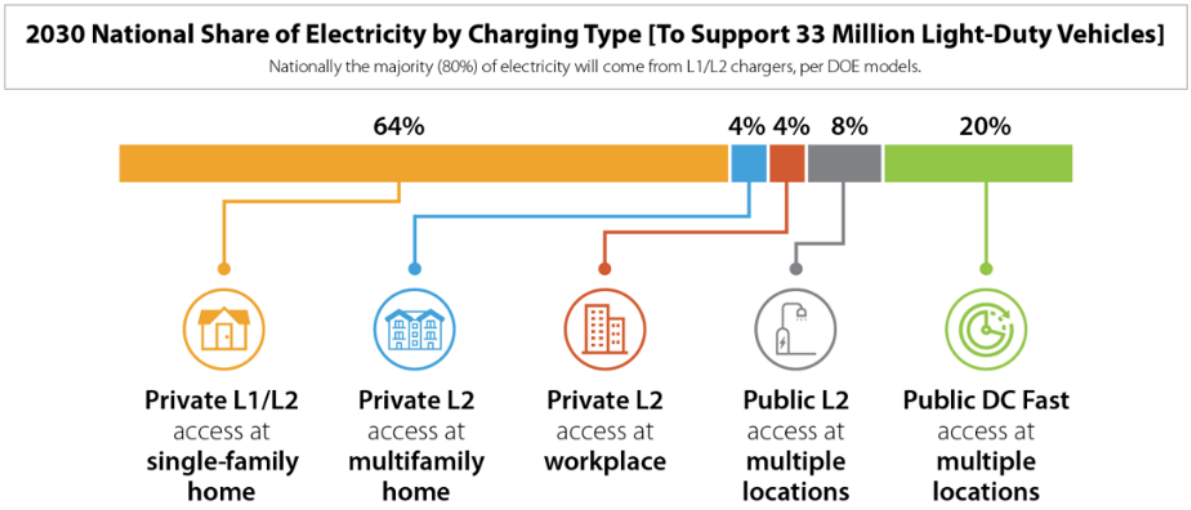
2. The Multifamily Charging Gap

2.1. Why it matters

EVs make life easier than a gasoline-powered car—when drivers can plug in where they live. But when they can't, EVs are more time-consuming, and that's the story for too many apartment dwellers. And today, about 85% of all EV charging happens at home, mostly using Level 2 chargers that power a car overnight.[1] Those home EV drivers get to skip the gas station.

Home charging works great for people who live in single-family houses but tends to be a challenge for the millions of Americans who live in rental apartments and condos. Around a third of U.S. households, live in the 44 million homes in multifamily buildings.[2] In buildings with five or more units, 88% of those are renters.[3] Across the top 25 U.S. cities by population, the average share of households in buildings with five or more units rises to 36%, and it tops 50% in New York City, Seattle, and Washington, DC.[4]

National modeling by the U.S. Department of Energy projects that by 2030 about 64% of charging will happen at single-family homes, while only about 4% will be private charging in multifamily parking.[5] In other words, home charging often works for houses, but is a frequent challenge for apartments, condominiums, and co-op residents.



https://www.energy.gov/cmei/vehicles/evgrid-assist-charts-and-figures

Multifamily housing is also more complex because charging cannot be installed using a "one size fits all" formula. Multifamily housing spans renters to condo owners, to co-ops, to townhouses—each with its unique set of processes, approvals and costs. Owners of single-family homes have greater autonomy; they do not need the permission of a board or property manager.

Installing even a single charger at a multifamily residence tends to be more expensive than at a single-family home. The buildings are larger and parking may be farther from the electrical source, requiring longer runs of wiring and conduit and potentially involving trenching through pavement or concrete.[6] Enabling billing residents for the electricity they use may involve installing a submeter or ongoing software fees.

Apartment renters face dual challenges. In addition to the typically higher costs associated with both rental

and owner-occupied multifamily properties, landlords may not be eager to invest in charging—at least at current levels of EV adoption. Renters would not only need landlord permission to install on their own dime but may not anticipate a long enough stay in their rental to make the investment worthwhile.

At the same time, demand for EVs among multifamily residents is high, if charging is available and affordable. In a 2025 survey of California renters and condo owners by EVs for All America, in buildings with six or more units, 65% of owners and 70% of renters said they would be more likely to get an EV if their building offered overnight Level 2 charging that cost at least 40% less than gasoline.[7] Salata Institute research finds that urban, public Level 2 chargers tend to be less expensive per kWh than fast chargers in the same city, but the savings can easily be swamped by the additional time involved.[8] Level 2 chargers at multifamily buildings has the potential to offer the best of both. Solving the multifamily charging pinch point is essential if states hope to unlock millions of new EV buyers and avoid turning apartment living into a hidden inequity in the EV transition.

EV ownership is poised to rapidly diversify across incomes and states, making charging important at buildings from luxury to affordable. EVs are increasingly available and affordable, with more mainstream EV models on the market and a growing supply of used EVs. High gasoline prices due to the Iran War have raised focus on the lower and more stable cost of charging an EV vs. buying gas.[9] This second major jump in gasoline prices since 2022, when the war in Ukraine led to a year-long bump in gas prices, is likely to leave a lasting impression on drivers, as did the 1970s oil crises.

Rideshare vehicles are electrifying quickly, and a large share of those drivers cannot charge where they live. EVgo, a national fast-charging company, reports that about a quarter of its use already comes from rideshare drivers, and that it now sites stations where those drivers cluster.[10] In the largest metropolitan areas, independent taxi and rideshare drivers live in multifamily housing at well above the national rate, reaching about 42% in the New York metro, against a national benchmark near 31%.[11] Rideshare drivers illustrate the broader challenge: when residents cannot charge at home, they depend on convenient and reliable public or shared charging and create concentrated demand for it.

Demand for convenient charging extends beyond rideshare drivers. While charging at multifamily buildings remains a challenge, it is shifting from being a novelty to a more standard amenity. Many apartment listing sites now advertise EV charging as an amenity, along with air conditioning and dishwashers. Some housing owners and managers believe offering charging aids them to retain tenants. One large national property company asked existing renters why they were leaving, and many cited lack of charging. A National Multifamily Housing Council survey found that interest in charging access among renters rose from roughly 27% to roughly 34% in just two years.[12]

2.2. When there's parking at the building

Putting charging in new buildings is the easier part, retrofitting existing buildings for charging is the big challenge. Building codes affect new buildings, where wiring the conduit and panel capacity is far cheaper than adding it later.[13] Yet, new construction only adds about 600,000 units of the multifamily stock in a strong year—or about 2%—so the task is overwhelmingly one of retrofitting older buildings.[14] Retrofits tend to be more expensive than putting charging in a new building. And property owners want to see the math demonstrating that an investment in charging will pay off.

Charging investments may include not only the chargers and running power into the parking lot or garage,

but also potentially power upgrades. Some property owners also reassess the structural integrity of their garages at the same time for EVs, which are currently heavier than gas-powered cars, although that may change as battery technology improvements yield lighter batteries for the same amount of mileage.

Yet the revenue potential is there. In a 2026 Greystar survey of renters, 27% of respondents were interested in EV charging or would not rent without it, and 5% would not rent without it. Respondents placed an average rent premium of $68 per month on charging.[15] Residents who drive EVs crave convenience, availability, and reliability.

2.3. Public charging and on-street parkers

Drivers value speed and time when home charging is not available. For some urban residents, charging at home is never an option, because they lack off-street parking. Nearby curbside charging may serve as a good option. Residents can use charging apps to locate nearby chargers and check availability when they are ready to charge. Level 2 chargers in local parking lots or curbside can charge an EV in a few hours to a day or overnight, depending on the battery size, available power capacity, and charge added, after which owners need to move their car to free up the charger and find a new parking space. Fast charging at local shopping centers and businesses can enable residents to charge their EV while they are running errands like grocery shopping or going to the gym; commonly referred to as opportunity charging.

Public charging availability is still limited for many neighborhoods in the largest U.S. cities, and the ratio of chargers to multifamily households varies dramatically across cities. In California, where the EV share of vehicles is highest, Los Angeles, San Jose, and San Diego have at least one public charger for every 385 multifamily units. Dallas and Houston have fewer than one charger for every 1,000 multifamily units. The ratio is even higher in Chicago (>1,200) and New York City (>2,200), although many households do not own a car in those cities.[16]

Public chargers typically charge more to users than the residential electric rates a single-family homeowner would pay for home charging, narrowing the operating cost advantage of owning an EV versus a gas-powered car.

3. Different Stakeholders, Complementary Tools

No single stakeholder can solve the multifamily charging problem. Cities control zoning, permitting, and public space; utilities control the power needed to serve new chargers; property owners control buildings and parking; charging providers bring technology, capital, and operations; and states can direct funding and set statewide rules. This section explains what each group can do, and where their actions work best together.

3.1. Housing owners and managers

Property owners, managers, and condo associations hold the key to the most convenient solution: home charging for multifamily residents at buildings with parking lots and garages. Just like single-family homeowners, multifamily residents want to plug in when they get home and not go out of their way to charge. In survey by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning and surrounding counties, 46% of multifamily residents with a vehicle agreed that availability of charging stations near their home discouraged them from buying an EV, versus 32% of single-family residents.[17] Based on the California

survey cited above, 65% of condo owners and 70% of apartment renters rated a dedicated charging cable in their assigned parking space as most useful, followed by a bank of reservable chargers.[18] Similarly, in the 2024 National Multifamily Housing Council (NMHC) Renter Preferences Report, 28% of respondents said they would prefer charging in a dedicated charging spot.[19]

Although tech-focused amenities are increasingly important to renters, **most property owners will be newcomers to EV charging** and need a foundational understanding of how charging can be installed, maintained, and potentially become a revenue and retention asset.

Multifamily owners want to ensure EV charging investments make business sense, offering a sufficient payoff in terms of charging revenue; higher rents for parking or apartments; property value appreciation; lower vacancy from better tenant retention or higher applications; or some combination. Gables Residential, a large, national multifamily operator, developer, and management company, found that EV charging stations offer can create a new revenue stream while increasing the appeal of a community to current and prospective residents.[20] As EV adoption continues to expand, charging infrastructure represents an investment that can enhance competitiveness. Free tools are available to help property owners and managers do the financial analysis on EV chargers. (See box below, "Do chargers at your property make business sense? Models making it easy to do the math.")

New property developers have the opportunity to future-proof their properties by installing charging. This makes good financial sense. Preparing for EV charging at initial build is cheaper than retrofitting for it in the future. Some city and state building codes require new builds to make a certain share of parking spaces "EV ready" with power for chargers or have chargers in place, including Chicago, Minneapolis, and New York City, as well as California, Colorado, Massachusetts, and Washington State. [21]

Offering charging as an amenity may help existing buildings compete with newer buildings. Apartment developer, owner, and operator Gables Residential offers EV charging stations at 100% of its owned communities, representing over 15,000 apartments with a mix of surface parking lots and garages.[22] While more common for new builds, some cities apply EV ready requirements to major alterations of existing buildings, including Ann Arbor, St. Louis, and San Francisco.[23]

For condos, 17 states and cities including Boston and Washington, DC have **right-to-charge laws that ensure condominium associations do not unreasonably block unit owners from installing chargers** in dedicated spaces at their own expense.[24] Condo associations should similarly consider whether installing charging will increase property values and merit an association-level investment.

Even with strong demand from residents, charging can involve a major investment. Whether parking is an open lot or a garage, installing chargers at a multifamily building typically involves running power farther from the electrical source to parking spaces than at single-family homes. Power upgrades may be needed, although smart breakers and software solutions can sometimes enable charger installations without a new panel or transformer. Older parking structures typically have electrical systems sized only for lighting and ventilation, so adding chargers can mean upgrading the electrical service, or finding room for a new transformer. Property owners may also want to undertake engineering studies to handle the added load and weight of EVs, which are currently heavier than gas-powered vehicles. Condominiums have the same physical challenges, plus each parking space is individually owned so installers may have to run power to spaces in multiple areas of a garage rather than to one common point.

Here are strategies, tools, and takeaways property owners and managers can use to deploy EV charging for their residents:

Strategy #1: Evaluate the financial proposition of installing charging

- **Property owners and managers can access a variety of free online financial modeling tools specially designed to assess charger investments.** Some of these models will also identify state and utility incentives or rebates based on the property address. A property owner's actual costs may differ, especially in existing buildings, based on the type of parking (surface lot, parking garage, dedicated parking, etc.), the existing electrical capacity, and how usage will be billed.
- **Revenue models include charging residents for the electricity they use with some markup to reflect capital and maintenance costs, charging a higher rate for charger-equipped parking spaces, or charging a monthly fee** for access to a bank of shared chargers.
- **As an alternative to buying chargers, property owners can opt to contract with a CPO** to install, own, and operate onsite chargers, although the property owner may still need to handle other retrofit requirements.
- **Property owners can phase deployment and expenses by installing conduit and capacity for future growth**, launching with fewer ports (and optionally load management), and adding ports when utilization ramps up. That approach keeps down up-front costs while providing for growing demand.
- **Owners of multiple properties may get better pricing on a portfolio basis**, versus property by property.
- **Property owners may also opt to place NEMA 14-50 (Level 2-compatible) outlets in parking locations to avoid operating and maintain the EV charger.** Renters may provide their own equipment—charging cords incorporating charge management hardware.

Strategy #2: Use data to assess a property's charging needs, then tailor solutions

- **Property owners can gauge demand by tracking the number of EVs parked on their properties and asking applicants about their vehicle's make and model, or by surveying residents and prospective tenants.** Over time, this information can aid in planning for long-term investments.
- **Where shared chargers are the best option, offering a reservation system for shared chargers** can provide residents with confidence that they can charge when they need to. According to JD Power Associates, "scheduled charging boosts satisfaction and helps lower costs."[25]
- **At buildings that lack parking, owners and managers can explore facilitating curbside charging adjacent to the building.** Contact the city government to see if it allows curbside parking and if their location is a candidate. Explore faster and lower cost installations that leverage excess power at the building rather than a new utility interconnection, such as it's electric or Gravity.[26]

Strategy #3: Explore ways to mitigate costs

- **Some multifamily charging systems incorporate smart panel or automated load management capabilities, avoiding electrical upgrades** by managing charging to the building's available excess power at any given moment, including EverCharge, Pando Electric, and SWTCH.[27]
- **Local utilities may offer information on any rebates** for multifamily charger installation as well as approved vendors for those, as do Boston's Eversource and Austin Energy.[28]
- **Owners should budget for maintenance** to ensure chargers remain in service and generating revenue, while also preventing resident frustration.

In Practice

Greystar charges its Seattle-area portfolio at no capital cost

Greystar, the largest apartment operator in the United States, used a state program to electrify its Washington State portfolio without paying for the infrastructure itself. Backed by the Washington Department of Commerce's EV charging program, Greystar is deploying roughly 2,500 charging ports across 136 of its multifamily communities in the state, with equipment, installation, and network handled by outside partners. In Seattle, its West Edge high-rise received 20 Level 2 chargers in the parking garage at no out-of-pocket cost to ownership.

Sources: SWTCH Energy (Greystar Washington deployment) https://swtchenergy.com/blog/news/swtch-energy-selected-to-power-2500-ev-chargers-in-136-greystar-properties-across-washington-state/; *Resound Energy (West Edge, Seattle)* https://www.resoundenergy.com/west-edge-apartments/

The nation's largest public housing authority procures resident charging

The New York City Housing Authority, the largest public housing landlord in North America, issued a 2026 solicitation inviting private partners to build and operate Level 2 and fast-charging stations at its properties at no cost to the authority. Partners finance, build, and maintain the chargers under long-term leases and must offer discounted rates to low- and moderate-income New Yorkers, including NYCHA residents, advancing the authority's goal of 150 public charging stations. These stations will serve both residents and non-residents.

Source: NYCHA press release (May 2026) https://www.nyc.gov/site/nycha/about/press/pr-2026/pr-20260512.page

A real-estate manager brings a no-cost charging model to apartments

CBRE, one of the largest commercial real-estate services firms, partnered with infrastructure owner-operator 3V Infrastructure in 2025 to expand charging at U.S. multifamily properties at no capital cost to owners. CBRE uses its network of property owners to match apartment communities with the model while 3V finances, installs, owns, and operates the Level 2 chargers, an approach aimed at reducing the up-front cost.

CBRE also has an EV Infrastructure Solutions team that advises multifamily owners on EV charging strategy across ownership models. The team evaluates the financial case for each property, runs competitive selection among charging providers, and negotiates terms such as revenue share, pricing, and service commitments.

Sources: CBRE https://www.prweb.com/releases/3v-infrastructure-and-cbre-partner-to-expand-ev-charging-infrastructure-at-multifamily-properties-across-the-us-with-no-cost-solution-302383089.html *and* https://www.cbre.com/insights/viewpoints/enterprise-ev-infrastructure-is-complex.

A green standard builds charging into affordable housing

Enterprise Community Partners embeds EV readiness in its Green Communities Criteria, which requires EV-ready wiring and charging capacity in parking areas. It plans charging when building new or rehabilitating existing affordable buildings rather than bolting it on later, extending access to its lower-income renters.

Enterprise also has a dedicated Clean Energy Solutions team and recently won a grant to install solar power and battery storage for its mid-Atlantic properties. These solutions not only generate and store power, but they can lower costs for residents who charge during peak hours and reduce the property's overall electricity bill.

Source: Enterprise Green Communities Criteria https://www.greencommunitiesonline.org/

Dedicated charging at every parking space

Peninsula Pines Apartments in South San Francisco recently completed the largest EV retrofit in California and the second largest in the nation. The complex's 200 parking stalls have blended L1 and L2 charging capability and use an app for users to pay for charging—which is not associated with a specific resident or apartment, making it easier if someone moves. By tying into the existing electricity in the carports, the project was less expensive than other retrofits which require electrical upgrades.

Source: https://www.smdailyjournal.com/news/local/peninsula-pine-apartments-adds-200-ev-chargers-in-south-san-francisco/article_83caca79-4c8a-4bfb-8d99-69c545babc46.html

Condos empower residents to purchase EVs by making charging installation possible

Cascadian Court Condominiums in Portland, Oregon avoided expensive electric upgrades for EV charging by running wiring from the complex's electrical room to the in-unit panel within the condo using an EVEMS system. This allows the costs of charging to be billed directly to the EV owner at residential rates and turns off power to the charging unit when the complex's power demand is high. This process also permits condo owners to bypass ongoing HOA board approval and install L2 charging in their deeded parking spaces.

Source: https://chargeathome.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Charge-at-Home-Case-Study-Conserve-Energy-2025.pdf

Do chargers at your property make business sense? Models making it easy to do the math

These free financial modeling tools can help property owners evaluate the costs and potential financial returns of investing in EV charging. They vary in their intended users, assumptions, and level of detail, but generally allow owners to assess project costs, revenues, incentives, and other financial outcomes.

Charge at Home Project Builder

Built specifically for multifamily properties, the tool uses basic property and charging inputs to estimate site-specific project costs and financial metrics, identify potential state and utility incentives, compare build-out scenarios, and estimate ROI. It is easy to use and comes from Charge at Home, a nonprofit-led multifamily charging initiative.

Link: https://projectbuilder.chargeathome.org/input

CBRE EV Charging Revenue Calculator

The tool compares three charging business models (owner-funded, subscription/CaaS, and zero-upfront-cost third-party ownership) and estimates potential charging revenue as well as rent, occupancy, NOI, and property-value impacts. Results depend on assumptions entered by the user, including utilization, rent premiums, vacancy changes, and provider terms.

Link: https://ev-businessmodel-calculator.netlify.app/

Electrification Coalition EVSE Pricing Calculator

Designed primarily for municipalities and fleets, the tool also supports multifamily properties by allowing users to enter property-specific installation costs, utility rates, incentives, expected usage, and charging fees. It estimates capital investment, revenue, operating costs, payback, NPV, and annual cash flow.

Link: https://electrificationcoalition.org/resource/evse-pricing-calculator/

Charge OnSite ROI Calculator

Designed for multifamily property owners, the calculator uses inputs such as number of units, EV adoption, electricity costs, charging fees, and cap rate to estimate charger needs, CapEx, charging revenue, net income, payback, five-year ROI, and potential property-value impact. Charge OnSite is an EV charging vendor that builds some cost and operating assumptions into the calculator rather than requiring the user to enter them.

Link: https://www.chargeonsite.com/roi-calculator

C2ES EV Charging Financial Analysis Tool

A free Excel-based model that allows users to evaluate EV charging investments using assumptions about costs, utilization, revenue, financing, and project structure, with outputs including NPV, IRR, discounted payback, and sensitivity analysis. The tool was developed for projects that may involve multiple public and private partners, so it includes more detailed financial inputs and analysis than some of the other tools.

Link: https://www.c2es.org/document/ev-charging-financial-analysis-tool/

3.2. City governments

Cities hold a unique set of levers to create charging access for their multifamily residents. They write zoning rules and building codes, control curbs and public property, run permitting, and steer incentives. City governments can also convene and coordinate across stakeholders—including property owners, charge point operators (CPOs), local businesses, and utilities—to develop a charging network to serve its multifamily residents, even if the city itself lacks financial resources to invest. City governments also control real estate throughout their jurisdiction that could host public charging, at curbs, libraries, and parks.

A city government's most concrete tools for expanding charging at multifamily buildings are EV-ready building codes for new construction and right-to-charge laws for residents, alongside zoning reform.[29] To date, 12 states and 53 local governments have added EV provisions to their building codes, local ordinances and zoning requirements across the country.[30]

That said, cities should strike a balance between encouraging on-site charging and costs to property owners. Some developers treat EV-ready codes and requirements as effective levers; others argue that they may drive up rents to recoup costs. While setting codes wisely, city governments may want to devote a limited incentive budget toward rebates or tax credits for installing chargers at affordable housing.

Cities can also play a supportive role in ensuring that charging networks are distributed across neighborhoods with multifamily housing. Some cities use their limited budgets to close charging gaps and install in places where the private market is not present.[31] Other cities have created tools to request chargers in their neighborhoods including Boston, Los Angeles, Portland, and Seattle.[32] Since the number one barrier to EV adoption is the fear of not being able to charge the car, developing a robust network throughout the city can enable residents across incomes to drive an EV.[33]

City governments can send market signals about their EV charging priorities through targeted initiatives and programs as highlighted in city sustainability plans or dedicated electrification plans.[34] For example, the City of Boston has a city goal of having every resident within a five-minute walk of a charging station.[35] Organizing an annual summit with utilities, CPOs, property owners, and local businesses who could host charging can catalyze action and collaboration.

Here are strategies, tools, and takeaways city governments can use to facilitate easy EV charging for their multifamily residents:

Strategy #1: Make permit approval fast and easy by streamlining zoning and permitting.

- **Create online applications with the minimum information needed for official review** while ensuring health and safety compliance.[36] Better yet, route the online submission directly to the city and the utility to eliminate the need to submit the same information twice and speed the application process.

- **Approve charger applications by default ("by-right") with a short turn around.** San Diego County offers same-day permits for residential chargers and reports that 2-3-day permit issuance is typical for commercial projects.[37]

- **Apply by-right across zoning classifications** (multifamily housing, retail, commercial, industrial, single-family) to ensure all neighborhoods are included.[38]

- **Remove obstacles from the city's zoning code.** Zoning written before EVs existed can inadvertently block or slow development of the stand-alone EV charging sites that densely populated areas like downtowns need.[39] Several major cities either have revised or are in the process of revising zoning to allow charging hubs.

- **Offer concierge service to guide property managers through the process.** Installing EV chargers or EV-ready equipment may require electrical permits, on-site inspections, and more. The City of Los Angeles's Concierge Services assigns a case manager to a project, checks online documents and helps applicants through the necessary departments for building developments.[40]

Strategy 2: Use other tools to guide EV charging installation

- **When setting EV-ready codes, use points-based approaches that enable developers to meet charging goals in the way that fits the site.** For example, Boston's EV-ready rules allow a mix of charging speeds.[41] Other options include allowing a mix of installed chargers and EV-ready spaces or requiring EV readiness in a substantial proportion but not all spaces.

- **Encourage property managers to use smart panels and smart breakers** (also known as automated load management) as cost-effective ways to add chargers without retrofitting a building's electrical system or reduce the magnitude of an upgrade if still needed. Doing so will alleviate cost at many buildings, given the median multifamily building was built in the 1980s and is about 40 years old.[42] Ensure building inspectors know the policy with an official memo.

- **Consider rebates or tax credits for chargers**, budget permitting, to enable charging opportunities for multifamily residents without driving up construction costs, which could limit new housing or lead to higher rents. With a limited budget, city governments may want to prioritize affordable housing, where supply and rents are likely to be most sensitive to added costs. Cities can also explore extending rebates or tax credits to existing multifamily properties to incentivize them to add chargers, or to property developers and managers who fund chargers at nearby businesses or parks, particularly if their own properties have no or limited on-site parking.

Strategy #3: Use city assets as strategic charging locations.

- **Place chargers in the public right of way using the curb**, as cities including New York City and San Francisco did.[43] Portland, Oregon has standard terms under which any CPO applicant can obtain a permit to install curbside chargers.[44]

- **Install Level 2 public charging stations on city property such as libraries and parks**, as Houston did, prioritizing these high multifamily neighborhoods.[45] Cities can enter partnerships with CPOs that would install, own, and operate on city property, on property leased from the city, or encourage local businesses to sponsor chargers.

- **Explore lower cost and faster curbside charger installation approaches that leverage power from adjacent buildings or utility poles**, especially near multifamily residences without off-street parking or that have not installed chargers in their parking areas.[46] Installations on utility poles and streetlights like in Kansas City and Los Angeles where voltage allows, can reduce costs by putting charging at power sources and eliminating trenching. New form factors such as bring-your-own-cord chargers can bring down maintenance costs.

- In tackling charging deserts in high-multifamily neighborhoods, **complement charging on city assets by encouraging neighborhood businesses to host fast chargers.** Ideal locations are neighborhood supermarkets, fitness centers, and other locations where people go at least weekly and stay for 20 minutes to an hour.

Strategy #4: Strategic data collection and use–for both city planning and private installations.

- **Create information hubs to make it easy for property owners to tackle charger installation and for CPOs to target high-multifamily neighborhoods.** Valuable information includes the city's permitting process; links to utility maps and state or utility rebates; GIS maps with Census data on multifamily and rental housing density; surveys of residents interested in EVs with housing type, parking, and ownership; and links to free tools property owners can use to assess the financial case for installing chargers (see box on p. 11). Atlanta and Boston have EV charging guides, as does the California Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development's (GOBiz).[47]

- **Survey multifamily residents to identify where residents want to buy an EV.** Identifying the locations of highest latent EV demand can enable a city to prioritize public charging there and make residents aware of existing charging options. Armed with that data, city governments can share maps with potential and current EV owners, multifamily property owners, and CPOs to encourage their investment.

In Practice

EV-ready ordinances build in charging before the concrete sets

Cities use their control of building codes to make new multifamily buildings charging-ready from the start, when running conduit, adding panel capacity, and wiring spaces costs a fraction of what a later retrofit would. San Francisco was among the first U.S. cities to require it, with an EV-ready ordinance effective in 2018, and major cities including Seattle, Chicago, and Atlanta now require at least 20% of spaces in new multifamily and commercial parking to provide EV-charging infrastructure.

Sources: SWEEP, CrackingtheCodeonEV-ReadyBuilding Codes https://www.swenergy.org/cracking-the-code-on-ev-ready-building-codes/*; San Francisco EV Readiness Code* https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/san_francisco/latest/sf_environment/0-0-0-48065

Los Angeles turns streetlights into curbside chargers

Los Angeles used infrastructure it already controls, its streetlights, to bring charging to residents who park on the street. Through the Bureau of Street Lighting, the city mounts Level 2 chargers on existing streetlight poles and draws on the poles' existing circuits, eliminating the need for a new service connection; the pole-mounted approach can cut installation costs by up to roughly 70% compared with ground-mounted stations. The city has installed more than 750 streetlight chargers, with plans for thousands more, giving apartment and other renters without a driveway a place to plug in near home.

Source: City of Los Angeles Bureau of Street Lighting https://lights.lacity.gov/connected-infrastructure/ev_stations

Right-to-charge laws open existing buildings

Right-to-charge laws bar landlords and condo or homeowner boards from unreasonably denying a resident's request to install charging at their own parking space and expense, so an apartment or condominium built long before EVs cannot simply refuse. California pioneered the approach, and a growing number of states, including Colorado, Illinois, Oregon, and Connecticut, now extend the right to both owners and renters. Because the resident funds the installation, the lever requires no public budget and works building by building without a construction mandate.

Source: GreenLancer, Right-to-Charge laws in California and beyond https://www.greenlancer.com/post/right-to-charge-laws

Atlanta now requires installed chargers, not just wiring

The updated 2025 EV-readiness ordinance (25-O-1011), effective Jan 1, 2026, sets three tiers (EVSE Capable/Ready/Installed) and requires new and majorly-renovated commercial and multifamily developments to deliver at least 20% of spaces with a fully installed, operable charger plus another 20% EVSE Capable—city-owned projects go higher (25% installed / 50% capable).

Source: Clean Energy Atlanta https://www.100atl.com/electric-vehicles

Chicago surveyed for pent-up EV demand

A Chicago survey identified potential EV owners discouraged by charging access and found fully 69% lived in multifamily housing—in contrast to the over 60% of current EV owners living in single-family homes. The survey expressly asked if charging was an obstacle to buying an EV. The survey data yields a map of where pent-up EV ownership and latent charging demand is highest.

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, My Daily Travel survey https://cmap.illinois.gov/data/transportation/travel-survey/

Houston created a nonprofit for collaboration and practical deployment of EVs

In 2019 the City of Houston partnered with a local Tier 1 university, the regional electric utility, a major energy company, and a retail energy supplier to advance EV adoption. This nonpartisan, public-private collaboration model has raised EV awareness, produced practical deployments of EVs, and convened businesses, local government, and communities to identify local challenges and opportunities.

Source: Evolve Houston https://evolvehouston.org/.

3.3. Utilities

Utilities control whether and how quickly companies can deploy charging. Every project depends on their approval and cooperation: they assess whether the grid can absorb new load without affecting other customers and expand infrastructure when more capacity is needed. How a utility responds to new charger demand will speed—or slow—the pace of charger rollout at multifamily buildings and public sites.

Utilities can also support EV adoption incentives and rebates, many of which are oversubscribed. Make-ready support, in which the utility funds the electrical work up to the charger, can remove the single largest barrier to a project, since behind-the-charger electrical work can be up to 60% of total project cost.[48] Utilities in more than 25 states have enacted make-ready programs, including investor-owned utilities as well as municipals and cooperatives.[49]

For investor-owned utilities, expanding these programs requires approval from public utility commissions (PUCs), which decide whether utilities can include these investments in their rates. Some regulators and other stakeholders have questioned having all ratepayers contribute to chargers used only by EV drivers. Georgia, for example, requires charging investments included in Georgia Power's rate base to be publicly available, limiting the use of ratepayer funds for chargers or make-ready infrastructure at multifamily properties.[50] The multi-year cycle of utility rate adjustments can also constrain utilities from starting new EV charging programs between cycles. PUCs may review utility investment and rate proposals every three to five years—a long timeline in the context of EV adoption.

Here are strategies, tools, and takeaways for utilities to enable charging in their city:

Strategy #1: Plan for charging and facilitate energization

- **Publish capacity maps** enabling players like city government and CPOs to identify locations within a shorter timeline to install and consider timeline tradeoffs at locations that would involve new utility investments. Com Edison publishes a map to help multiple stakeholders understand existing capacity.[51]
- **Anticipate and prepare for EV charging demand.** Unless a city has widespread and ample excess power, utilities should expect requests for charging at multifamily residences and high-traffic locations where current capacity may not be adequate and prepare to serve those.

Strategy #2: Work collaboratively with multifamily property owners seeking to install charging

- **Provide a single point of contact or concierge service to commercial charging applicants**, whether CPOs or multifamily property owners, to shepherd their applications and connect applicants to other utility teams, such as capacity assessment. Installing EVSE or EV Ready equipment may require electrical permits, on-site inspections, and more from multiple departments.
- **Offer EV charging tariffs to property managers** to give them the certainty to set charging rates for residents. Rates should be stable month-to-month but could vary by time of day, like residential EV charging rates. Encourage submetering to make it easy for property managers, charge point operators, and owners to track electricity used for charging.

Strategy #3: Use smart technology and strategic locations to deploy charging faster

- **When power capacity is a binding limit for high-value charging locations, utilities should allow multifamily properties and CPOs to use tools like managed charging, private submetering, and smart breakers** that share fixed power supply across chargers. Doing so can speed energization of chargers while bringing down infrastructure investment costs. New York City's Con Edison provided incentives for EV charging sites to pursue smart energy solutions like load management and battery storage.[52] The Alliance for Transportation Electrification offers strategies to overcome capacity constraints including phasing in capacity and flexible service connections.[53]
- **Install curbside Level 2 chargers on utility poles with excess capacity**, speeding deployment and lowering costs—or partner with CPOs to do so.[54] Doing so avoids expensive trenching to move power to a charger location. In Portland, Oregon, both Portland General Electric and Pacific Power have placed chargers on utility poles.[55] A utility could install and own the chargers or contract with private providers to supply and operate chargers on power poles, as Washington, DC plans.[56]
- **Prioritize filling charging gaps in high-multifamily neighborhoods**, whether for using utility poles or adding capacity to support charging. Some utilities own and operate charging on the principle that EV access should not leave any community behind.

In Practice

A utility owns the make-ready and adds a per-port rebate

Xcel Energy will design, own, install, and maintain the make-ready electrical infrastructure at no cost to multifamily hosts that install at least four charging stations, so the owner's remaining cost is only the chargers themselves. For income-qualified properties or those in high-emissions communities, Xcel adds a rebate of up to $8,500 per port toward eligible Level 2 stations.

Source: Xcel Energy (Colorado program summary via FLO) https://www.flo.com/rebates-and-incentives/colorado-incentive-programs/

Georgia Power builds and maintains the wiring to the charger

Georgia Power's Make Ready program takes on the electrical work that stalls most multifamily projects: the utility designs, builds, and maintains the infrastructure leading up to the chargers and funds up to $300,000 per qualifying project. A site qualifies by installing at least six Level 2 ports (or a DC fast charger), and the utility offers separate per-port rebates on the charging equipment itself. That leaves the property owner responsible mainly for the chargers rather than the costly service upgrade behind them.

Source: Georgia Power, Make Ready Infrastructure Program https://www.georgiapower.com/business/products-programs/business-solutions/electric-transportation-business-programs/make-ready.html

ComEd's make-ready pays more in equity communities

In Illinois, ComEd's make-ready rebate program covers the electrical infrastructure for charging at apartments, condominiums, and affordable housing. It pays a base rebate of up to $5,333 per Level 2 port, rising to up to $8,000 per port for customers in eligible low-income and equity-investment communities, with a ten-port maximum per project, so the chargers account for most of an owner's remaining costs.

Source: ComEd EV Make-Ready Rebate Program (program terms) https://swtchenergy.com/blog/incentives/incentive-eligible-illinois-properties-can-get-8k-per-charger-through-comeds-ev-make-ready-rebate-program/

Los Angeles Department of Water and Power's (LADWP) rebate reaches apartments through the commercial meter

Los Angeles's municipal utility offers commercial EV charger rebates to eligible multifamily properties, including apartments and condominiums. Qualifying chargers must be served directly by an LADWP meter. Properties receiving commercial electrical service or service supplying a grouping of residential accommodations, such as condo associations, may qualify. Chargers connected to individually metered residential units serving a single customer may instead qualify under the residential rebate program. The commercial rebate pays up to $5,000 per qualifying Level 2 charger and scales with the property, allowing one rebate per eligible parking space, up to 80 chargers and approximately $400,000 per premises, among the largest such rebates in the country. It supports the city's Climate Action Plan goal of 120,000 public and multifamily charging ports by 2030.

Sources: LADWP, Commercial EV Charger Rebate Program FAQ https://www.ladwp.com/commercial-services/programs-and-rebates-commercial/commercial-ev-charging/commercial-ev-charger-rebate-program/commercial-ev-charger-rebate-program-frequently-asked-questions*; Mayor Bass, Climate Action Plan for Los Angeles* https://mayor.lacity.gov/news/mayor-bass-releases-climate-action-plan-los-angeles

3.4. Charge point operators (CPOs)

CPOs support multifamily charging in three ways: by providing public DC fast charging for short stops, public Level 2 charging for longer stays, and charging equipment and software for multifamily buildings. Different CPOs play in each space, with some spanning two or more. Multiple CPOs focus heavily, if not entirely, on cities, including EVgo, it's electric, and Gravity.

Convenient and affordable public charging is crucial for multifamily residents who have or want an EV, but lack charging at their building—and may also lack off-street parking. CPOs that target high multifamily neighborhoods can serve today's EV-driving residents while enabling EV adoption among nearby drivers. That can mean DCFC near supermarkets, gyms, and coffee shops that serve a large number of multifamily residents for 15-to-60-minute stops, and Level 2 chargers at movie theaters and full-service restaurants, where people stay longer.

In cities with curbside charging programs, installing Level 2 chargers in neighborhoods where many multifamily residents routinely park on the street will be very convenient for residents—and are therefore likely to have healthy utilization. Curbside charging is a core solution in high EV adoption European cities including Oslo and London.

The growing used-EV market is bringing charging demand to a broader range of neighborhoods. CPOs can work with city governments to identify high-multifamily and high-renter areas, nearby businesses, multifamily buildings without on-site charging, and locations where residents have requested chargers or expressed interest in buying EVs. Rideshare and taxi drivers disproportionately live in multifamily housing, as shown in Section 2, making neighborhoods where many rideshare drivers live destinations where public chargers may swiftly achieve high utilization.

Here are strategies, tools, and takeaways for CPOs to enable charging in their city:

Strategy #1: Target high-multifamily neighborhoods and handy power sources

- **Focus on neighborhoods with high multifamily shares.** Consult city government in identifying high multifamily and high rental neighborhoods, as well as the nearby businesses that serve them.
- **Explore opportunities to install charging at curbside or other well-located city property**, such as libraries and parks in high multifamily neighborhoods.
- **Utilize existing power sources such as utility poles and adjacent buildings** to reduce cost and charger deployment timelines.

Strategy #2: Diversify funding mechanisms by partnering with and securing funding with other stakeholder groups

- **Explore available incentives offered by government entities and utilities to install charging in more locations.** CPOs often qualify for rebates and incentives offered by city procurement or utility programs.
- **Support rate cases and city and state budgets that budget for EV charging.** Provide testimony and letters of support to agencies and state legislatures to advocate for additional funding and provide evidence from the CPO on successful deployments.

Strategy #3: Simplify ownership and management

- **Provide solutions that simplify charging management for property and condo owners** so they can focus on their core tasks like leasing units and maintaining the property. Chargepoint offers software solutions that let property managers provide charging access to EV drivers, adjust pricing, manage payments and assess charger usage, for example.

3.5. State legislatures, state energy and environmental agencies, public utility commissions

Many states care about EV adoption, and therefore about charging as a cost-effective lever. States with climate goals see EV adoption as a powerful avenue to reduce emissions. Battery Belt states with EV and battery plants want to see EV adoption for economic development and jobs. Most states are striving to raise housing supply and improve affordability; multifamily housing is one solution, and it's important to serve those residents through the EV transition.

State energy offices, environmental agencies, and public utility commissions have all served as pivotal funders of multifamily charging. State funding can level the playing field across cities in the state, supplement typically tighter city government budgets, and create state-wide EV-readiness standards for multifamily buildings. The California Energy Commission has funded multifamily charging at scale through rebate and infrastructure programs, directing a substantial share specifically to Level 2 charging at apartments and condominiums.[57]

States can also direct charging investment to charging deserts, multifamily buildings, and low-income communities by giving grant applications in these areas extra points and offering higher per-charger funding for projects in these areas. New Jersey, New York, and California have all designed programs to do so, as detailed in the box below. States can also back right-to-charge laws.

Public utility commissions can support charging investments at and near multifamily buildings by allowing utilities to put such investments into their regulatory capital.

Here are strategies, tools, and takeaways for state legislatures, state agencies and PUCs to enable charging in their state:

- **Create funding programs for multifamily residents to encourage charging installation.** Many utilities already have single-family home rebates in place; consider extending them to multifamily complexes.
- **Use targeted funding to create more comprehensive citywide networks.** Diversify charging installation by incentivizing charging in low-income communities so all multifamily residents benefit, regardless of neighborhood.
- **Monitor sister agency incentives.** By layering support across different parts of the EV ecosystem, EV ownership becomes easier. One agency may offer rebates for EV purchasing while another offers charging installation incentives.
- **Use sister agency data to strategically plan incentive programs.** Partner with the DMV, talk with CPOs and housing managers and others to form an analysis on where EV drivers live, where chargers are, and how state agencies can strategically leverage resources to eliminate charging barriers.

In Practice

A state authority pays per port, with more for disadvantaged areas

New York's state energy authority, NYSERDA, runs Charge Ready NY 2.0, which pays multifamily properties a rebate of $3,000 for each Level 2 charging port installed, plus an additional $1,000 per port for sites located in a designated Disadvantaged Community. Paying on a per-port basis directs public dollars specifically toward the shared charging that apartments and condominiums need.

Source: NYSERDA, Charge Ready NY 2.0 https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/All-Programs/Charge-Ready-NY

A state board targets multifamily and overburdened towns

The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities runs a Multi-Unit Dwelling EV Charger Incentive Program that grants owners and operators up to $4,000 per eligible Level 2 charger, rising to up to $6,000 per charger for buildings in overburdened municipalities. The board committed roughly $15 million to the program, concentrating state money on the housing type the market serves last.

Source: New Jersey Board of Public Utilities, Multi-Unit Dwelling EV Charger Incentive Program https://nj.gov/bpu/pdf/boardorders/2021/20211215/8G%20ORDER%20Multi%20Unit%20Dwelling%20EV.pdf

California requires new-build apartments to provide EV infrastructure

Rather than leave EV-readiness to individual cities, California sets it in the statewide green building code, CALGreen, which reaches every new multifamily project. The 2022 code required a quarter of parking spaces at new multifamily buildings to offer Level 2 charging receptacles; the 2025 update, effective in 2026, goes much further, requiring essentially all assigned spaces to be EV-ready and a large share to have Level 2 receptacles or chargers. Building the capacity in at construction avoids the far higher cost of retrofitting the same wiring later.

Source: 2025 California EV Charging Codes and Regulations (CALBO / Permit Sonoma) https://permitsonoma.org/Microsites/Permit%20Sonoma/Documents/Divisions/Building/2025-California-EV-Charging-Codes-and-Regulations.pdf

California's air board funds clean mobility in overburdened and low-income areas

The California Air Resources Board funds community clean-transportation projects, including EV charging, in the disadvantaged, low-income, and overburdened communities where much affordable and multifamily housing sits. Its Clean Mobility Options program provides vouchers of up to $1.5 million per project for community-chosen options such as electric car-sharing and the charging infrastructure that supports it. The board's role here is mobility and infrastructure funding in these communities rather than a dedicated per-building multifamily rebate.

Source: CARB, Clean Mobility Options Voucher Pilot Program https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/resources/fact-sheets/clean-mobility-options-voucher-pilot-program

4. Conclusion

Apartment and condominium dwellers need a convenient place to plug in before they buy an EV. Charging in a dedicated space can make EV ownership as easy as home charging at a single-family home. For residents without on-site parking, nearby public charging can fill the gap—the closer it is to home or a regular destination, the better.

This report aims to empower stakeholders by presenting a menu of proven strategies and powerful options. Across city governments, property owners, utilities, CPOs, the key themes are:

- **Leverage proven strategies.** Expand EV-ready building codes, right-to-charge laws, utility make-ready programs, submetering, and financial tools, directing them toward existing multifamily buildings and neighborhoods where charging access is most limited.
- **Streamline deployment and target resources.** Faster zoning, permitting, and utility approvals can reduce delays and costs. Data can help cities, utilities, states, and CPOs direct investments, rebates, and other resources to high-multifamily neighborhoods and charging deserts. Managed charging, smart breakers, and existing power sources can stretch available capacity.
- **Forge collaborations.** Cities, utilities, property owners, CPOs, and states control different parts of the solution. Working together can unlock sites, power, funding, and operating models that no single stakeholder can provide alone.

Whatever strategy your organization chooses, commit to one action that you can implement in the near term. Small steps can help propel a charging program forward, while other initiatives require partnership, advocacy, and sustained funding.

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The mission of the Salata Institute for Climate and Sustainability at Harvard University is to develop and promote durable, effective, and equitable solutions to the climate change challenges confronting humanity. The institute serves as a fulcrum for collaboration across Harvard's many areas of expertise, pursuing practical, real-world solutions and engaging directly with governments, businesses, NGOs, and communities to implement them.

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The Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School of Public Policy at the Georgia Institute of Technology educates leaders who can ethically address societal problems through the policy process, and generates knowledge that contributes to sustainability, a more equitable society, and innovation at the intersection of science and technology.

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