Township of North Kawartha
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www.northkawartha.ca

Report to Council

To: Mayor and Council Members

From: Edward Hilton, Economic Development Officer

Date: June 2, 2026

Subject: Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Infrastructure – Survey Results

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Recommendation:

That Council receive the Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Survey results for information; and further, that Council direct staff to proceed with a feasibility assessment for a potential pilot EV charging project, including site analysis, funding opportunities, and review of partnership and alternative delivery models.

Background:

The Township of North Kawartha conducted an Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Survey between January 29, 2026 and March 31, 2026 to assess public interest in EV charging infrastructure and to better understand local and visitor demand.

A total of 172 responses were received from a mix of year-round residents, seasonal residents, and visitors. The survey was intended to inform potential future consideration of EV charging infrastructure as part of broader economic development and visitor servicing initiatives.

Analysis:

Survey Results and Key Findings

Survey respondents consisted primarily of 51.8% year-round residents and 41.8% seasonal residents or cottagers, with a smaller proportion of visitors. This distribution reflects both local and seasonal demand patterns within the Township.

In terms of vehicle ownership and intent, 28.1% of respondents indicated they currently own a battery electric vehicle (BEV), while 8.8% own a plug-in hybrid (PHEV). A further 32.2% indicated they are planning to purchase an EV, while 31.0% indicated no current plans to do so. These results suggest that EV adoption within the Township is growing, but not yet universal, indicating an emerging rather than fully established demand for charging infrastructure.

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Among respondents who do not currently own an EV, the most commonly identified barriers were cold weather performance (51.4%), lack of local charging infrastructure (39.6%), vehicle cost (36.1%), and range or towing concerns (35.4%). The identification of charging availability as a leading barrier indicates that local infrastructure may play a role in influencing future adoption.

With respect to private charging availability, only 15.4% of respondents reported having a Level 2 charger at their residence or cottage, while 29.5% rely on a standard outlet (Level 1), and 20.5% indicated that their electrical system or property cannot support installation of a charger. These findings are notable in a rural and seasonal context, where electrical capacity limitations and property characteristics may restrict private charging options and increase reliance on public infrastructure.

Preferred locations for public EV charging were concentrated in central Apsley, with the North Kawartha Community Centre, Apsley public parking areas, and the Apsley Public Library identified most frequently. Respondents generally favoured locations that are centrally located, accessible from main routes, and within walking distance of local businesses and services.

With respect to charger type, 33.1% of respondents indicated a preference for Level 3 (DC fast charging), while 27.1% indicated a preference for a mix of Level 2 and Level 3 chargers. A notable portion of respondents indicated that the question was not applicable to them. Typical charging duration was identified as 30 to 60 minutes, aligning with use patterns associated with fast charging and supporting integration with local commercial and service areas.

Survey results related to economic impact were mixed. While 38.2% of respondents indicated that the presence of EV charging infrastructure would lead them to spend more at local businesses, 30.0% indicated they would stay longer and 25.9% indicated they would visit more often, an equal proportion (38.2%) indicated that EV chargers would not change their behaviour. This suggests that economic benefits may be present but concentrated among EV users and prospective adopters rather than broadly distributed across all residents.

A total of 64.3% of respondents indicated a willingness to pay for EV charging, with pay-per-kilowatt-hour identified as the preferred payment model. Survey responses also indicate that demand for EV charging is not limited to peak summer months, with approximately half of respondents indicating potential use during winter. This suggests that EV infrastructure may serve both seasonal and year-round needs.

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Open-Ended Feedback

Open-ended responses reflected a range of perspectives. Supportive comments emphasized the need to prepare for future EV adoption, the importance of fast charging infrastructure, and the opportunity to attract visitors and capture through-traffic along Highway 28.

Conversely, a number of respondents expressed concern regarding the use of municipal tax dollars, the prioritization of other infrastructure needs, and whether EV charging should be provided by the municipality or the private sector. Additional considerations raised included the need for enforcement of designated charging spaces, simple payment systems, and potential impacts on already limited parking in central areas.

Site Considerations – North Kawartha Community Centre (NKCC)

While the North Kawartha Community Centre (NKCC) was identified as one of the most preferred locations in the survey, staff have identified several operational considerations through preliminary review with the EV ChargeON grant process. These include parking capacity during peak periods, future building growth, and site circulation. In addition, winter operations present constraints, including the need to accommodate snow storage and snow clearing, which may limit available space and affect placement of fixed infrastructure such as EV charging stations. These considerations will require further review and will be brought forward in a separate report prior to any site-specific recommendation.

Site Considerations – 143 Burleigh Street

The Apsley Public Parking Lot at 143 Burleigh Street was one of the top preferred locations identified in the survey. As part of the current site improvements planned for later this year, this site will be designed with the necessary rough-ins for EV Level 2 charging stations, including additional conduit capacity to support future installation of Level 3 (DC Fast) chargers in the future.

EV Charging Stations & Tourism

Communities across cottage country and rural Ontario, including Haliburton County and Hastings County, are increasingly incorporating EV charging infrastructure into their tourism marketing and visitor communications. By highlighting charging station locations on tourism websites, wayfinding materials, and regional travel tools, these destinations

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are signalling that EV drivers are welcome and supported, helping to reduce a key barrier to rural travel.

This reflects a clear dual benefit. From an environmental perspective, EV charging infrastructure supports broader sustainability objectives by reducing transportation-related emissions, particularly in areas where natural assets are central to the tourism experience. From an economic development perspective, it strengthens the local tourism economy by encouraging longer stays, increased visitor movement, and greater spending at local businesses.

There is also an emerging economic benefit associated with operating charging stations on a cost-recovery basis. While the full impact is difficult to quantify at this stage, revenues can help offset operational costs while maintaining accessible charging for visitors. At the same time, indirect benefits such as increased visitor dwell time and local spending contribute to broader community economic activity beyond the charging stations themselves.

Provincial & Federal Policy Context

Staff note that there have been recent changes reflected in the provincial 2026 budget and federal 2026 spring economic updates, including broader shifts in infrastructure and electrification priorities. While these changes indicate continued interest in clean energy and infrastructure, specific program details and direct funding opportunities applicable to small municipalities remain uncertain at this time. Staff will continue to monitor federal and provincial announcements and position the Township to respond to any applicable funding opportunities.

Fuel Price Context

During the survey period (January 29 to March 31, 2026), global oil prices rose significantly, with crude experiencing notable increases amid ongoing geopolitical tensions. This resulted in higher gasoline prices at the pump across Ontario. Should fuel prices remain elevated in the long term, this trend is likely to accelerate EV adoption rates and increase utilization of public charging infrastructure in North Kawartha, as the higher operating costs of gasoline and hybrid vehicles make electric vehicles more financially attractive for residents, cottagers, and visitors.

Service Models

In addition, staff are exploring alternative delivery models, including land lease arrangements, partnerships with private sector providers, and potential collaboration with other municipalities to reduce financial and operational risk to the Township.

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Financial Implications:

At this time, no direct financial commitment is being requested.

The development of EV charging infrastructure would involve both capital and ongoing operating costs, including equipment, installation, electrical servicing, maintenance, and lifecycle replacement. Costs can vary significantly depending on charger type, site conditions, and electrical capacity.

While survey results show that most respondents are willing to pay for charging services, projected revenue remains uncertain and is unlikely to fully recover capital and operating costs, especially for Level 3 chargers. Staff are actively reviewing approaches used by other municipalities to manage Level 3 servicing costs and constraints, particularly demand charges.

Should Council direct staff to proceed, a future report will provide detailed cost estimates, funding opportunities, and analysis of financial models, including user-pay and partnership-based approaches, to support informed decision-making.

Strategic and/or Other Plans:

- Township of North Kawartha 2023-2026 Strategic Plan
  Infrastructure - 3. Environment

In Consultation With:

Jason Post, Deputy CAO

Attachment:

2026 EV Charger Survey PDF