

## AH's EV Charging Stations Latest to Draw State's Raves

by Jim Stickford

Two years of effort have paid off. Auburn Hills has been awarded the Michigan Chapter of the American Planning Association's Planning Excellence Award for Best Practices for the city's Electric Vehicle Ready Project.

Steve Cohen, Auburn Hills' director of Community Development, said when city officials learned that they will receive the award at the upcoming association dinner on Oct. 2, they were excited.

"We've been working on the program since 2011," Cohen said. "This is a state award by the Michigan chapter and they typically only give out one planning award a year, so it's quite an honor to learn that our project was selected."

Cohen said the project – which has placed charging stations for electric and hybrid vehicles around Auburn Hills – is just part of a larger effort by city officials to promote the latest in automotive driving technology.

It's only natural, he said, for the city that is home to Chrysler

and such international auto suppliers as Continental, Faurecia and BorgWarner to adopt the latest hardware required for the cars of tomorrow.

"One interesting thing that we've found," Cohen said, "is that it's not enough just to build the charging stations. We now know that a big part of the Electric Vehicle Ready Project is informing the public about the stations and making sure that in the future it will be easy to add additional charging infrastructure as it's needed."

Cohen said it's important that the city raise the public's awareness of charging infrastructure. It's not enough to place chargers around the city.

"What we learned is that because this technology is so new, people aren't aware of the charging stations," Cohen said. "More importantly, they aren't aware of the importance of having infrastructure in place so that when EVs and hybrids become more popular, putting in charging stations will be easier."

That's why, Cohen said, the city is working with businesses

to put in the infrastructure for charging stations in newly-constructed buildings.

The city's efforts extend to homeowners as well, Cohen said. That's important because while being able to charge a vehicle away from home is important, most EV and hybrid drivers do most of their vehicle charging at home.

New ordinances require any new home built in the city to have the infrastructure for charging stations built in.

"It's expensive for someone to retrofit his or her home so that a charger can be installed," Cohen said. "The average cost of the wiring and other needed hardware is about \$2,500. Then the

homeowner has to buy the charger. Costs for those vary, but \$600 is the figure I hear the most."

That's more than \$3,000, Cohen said. That kind of cost can discourage people from getting an EV. But if they buy a house with the infrastructure in place, then they just pay the cost of buying and installing the charger. So getting an EV is a little less intimidating.

These ordinances are part of the city's larger efforts to promote EVs and hybrids, Cohen said. Buildings constructed before they passed enjoy grandfather clause protection.

"It's great for the city to be honored," Cohen said, "but I just think this is a neat project."

## Talent Townhall Set for Aug. 28

A "Talent Town Hall" profiling different resources offered by Oakland County for area employees starts at 8 a.m. on Wednesday, Aug. 28, at Baker College of Auburn Hills, 1500 University Drive. The Talent Townhall was developed as a forum for business leaders to talk about issues of workforce development. Sponsors are Oakland University, Oakland Community College, Baker College, Snelling Staffing Services and *Corp! Magazine*.

The cost is \$25 for Auburn Hills Chamber of Commerce members, \$35 for non-members. Contact Rachael Jay of the Chamber at 248-853-7862 for more information.

## Ram Debuts HEMI 1500 Concept – A Honey of a Truck

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Bee" lettering and Ram logos adorn chairs, floor mats and door bolsters.

The interior centerpiece is an actual amber-encased bee mounted into the 8-speed rotary shifter knob that lights up to expose a honeycomb pattern background.

Two buttons below the knob control exhaust cutouts bypass the Mopar cat-back dual-exhaust system, allowing the full sound force of a 5.7-liter HEMI V8 to escape.

The unique honeycomb pattern is shared with door trim and the dash, where a milled aluminum "10th Anniversary" com-

memorative badge serves as the truck's ID.

"After people saw the vehicle, the first question I always heard was, 'Is it going into production?'" Cappa said. "My boss, Bob Hegbloom, director of Ram Truck Brand, said that right now there are no plans, but if the public shows enough interest in the vehicle, it's something the company will consider as a real possibility."

Cappa said he was also asked about whether Ram sees the Rumble Bee as competing against other sport trucks.

"My response was that Ram already offers an express model of the 1500 with a Hemi under the hood for under \$28,000," Cappa said.

"We build these concept vehicles for a couple of reasons. We do this because people enjoy it when we design vehicles outside the normal production focus. Secondly, it deepens the designers' love of designing when they can put something on paper and move it to the pavement in a matter of weeks."

Cappa said when the project was announced, there was no shortage of volunteers from Design and Engineering.

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## City of Auburn Hills Joins AARP's Age Friendly Network

The city of Auburn Hills has enrolled in AARP's Age Friendly Communities Network "to ensure Auburn Hills is a place where all generations feel welcome," said City Manager Pete Auger.

The AARP group is a collaborative effort recognizing that an age-friendly community thrives in diversity, compassion and acceptance for all generations while creating a community for all.

The AARP Network of Age Friendly Communities is an institutional affiliate of the World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities.

"Auburn Hills is already an all-ages-friendly community, but we are entering AARP's Age Friendly Communities Network to remain a leader in this area and continue to adopt best practices," said Auger.

"As part of the network, Auburn Hills will continue to conduct comprehensive community assessments using a variety of survey tools to analyze both our strengths and gaps in being an age-friendly community."

In May, Auburn Hills was designated by the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging (OSA) and the Commission on Services to the Aging as a "Community for a Lifetime" for its efforts to be an aging-friendly community. The city was noted for providing a range of home chore service options, multiple community events to promote inclusion and civic engagement, and a comprehensive walkway system, Auger said.

The city of Auburn Hills' Age Friendly Community Planning Collaborative will be guided, Auger said, by eight WHO indicators of a livable community:

- Outdoor spaces and buildings – universal access to and availability of safe recreational facilities;
- Transportation – safe and affordable modes of private and public transportation;
- Housing – wide range of housing options for older residents and other home modifications;
- Social participation – access

to leisure and cultural activities; opportunities for older residents to participate in social and civic engagement with their peers and younger community members;

- Respect and social inclusion – programs to support and promote ethnic and cultural diversity, along with programs to encourage multigenerational interaction and dialogue;

- Civic participation and employment – promotion of paid work and volunteer activities for older residents and opportunities to engage in formulation of policies relevant to their lives;

- Communication and information – promotion of and access to the use of technology to keep older residents connected to their community and friends and family, both near and far;

- Community support and health services – access to homecare services, clinics and programs to promote active aging.

The Collaborative will be led by Karen S. Adcock, Auburn Hills' senior services director, and Steve Cohen, community development director, Auger said. Together, Cohen and Adcock are responsible for overall operations of the project.

In addition to serving as liaisons to city council, city manager's office, city planning commission, AARP, WHO and the community, they will work closely with a leadership advisory team led by Auburn Hills' Legislative and Community Affairs Coordinator Stephanie Carroll, and oversee program participant efforts, including community partners, community advisory volunteers, supporting community members and city department stakeholders.

The first project of the collaborative will be to distribute a survey to city residents this fall to establish a baseline within the eight domains and further an understanding of the unique priorities for the city of Auburn Hills, Auger said. Once priorities are established, the data will be evaluated and monitored over time to determine progress and focus areas.



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  - Wednesday, September 25
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- between 5:30 and 7:30 p.m.

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