

Rancho San Joaquin

Frequently Asked Questions About Our SCE Community EV Chargers Project

What type of connector will the community EV chargers use?

Our HOA's community EV chargers will use a **J1772 plug**, which is the most common type of Level 2 connector and is compatible with most EV models.

Those who own an EV with a CCS connector will need to use a J1772 adapter when using our EV chargers.

When did this project start and how has the Board communicated it to the community?

After SCE approved our Charge Ready application in **October 2022**, the following took in the past year:

- The Board completed its due diligence on the terms of SCE's contract offer to cover the installation and charger costs – including conducting a homeowner survey and researching dozens of SCE-approved EV charger providers.
- The findings & recommendations for the Nuevo and Viejo chargers were then presented at a special open session meeting (online via Zoom) on **November 9, 2022**.
- [The November 9th presentation slides](#) were then emailed to the homeowners on November 10, 2022.
- The Board held another open session meeting on **November 22, 2022** in which SCE's contract offer was again discussed after having our HOA attorney review the terms of the contract, and the Board voted unanimously to accept their offer.
- The Board held a special executive session meeting++ on **December 21, 2022** to interview the top two EV charger candidates.
- The Board announced its selected EV charger provider, [Evgateway](#), at the **January 24, 2023** open session meeting, again after having our HOA attorney review the terms of the Evgateway contract. (The December meeting was skipped due to the holidays.)

++ *An executive session meeting is legally required when matters need to be discussed with third-party vendors relating to the formation of a potential contract.*

Since that time, the Board has kept the homeowners informed on the status of this project in the following email newsletters:

- [December 8, 2022](#), [March 2, 2023](#), [May 26, 2023](#), [July 21, 2023](#), [August 18, 2023](#), [August 25, 2023](#) and January 10, 2024

Rancho San Joaquin

Why can't the chargers be "spread out" with fewer chargers at different locations in our community?

As explained in the November 9th presentation slides, the Board requested a number of HOA guest parking locations from SCE. But SCE rejected all but two locations, Nuevo and Viejo.

Reasons included higher costs due to many of our guest parking locations being too far from an SCE electric substation. [See page 9 of the Board's presentation slides](#)

Doesn't our HOA CC&Rs or Bylaws require a homeowner vote on this project?

As part of our SCE EV charger agreement, it required that the HOA grant an easement to SCE so that they have right-of-way access to install and maintain their electrical equipment. Our CC&Rs at Article VI, Section 1(g) gives the Board the power to enter into this type of agreement.

Our CC&Rs at Article XII, Section 1(e) also state that any grant of common area requires 2/3rds vote of the members. However, the HOA did not "grant" any common area to SCE. Instead, we issued an easement and right-of-way access. Therefore, a member vote was *not* required.

This is no different than when the HOA granted an easement to SoCal Gas in 2018. No member vote was required since the common area was not granted to SoCal Gas – only an easement and right-of-way access on our common area.

Won't people with electric cars prefer to charge their cars in their own garages?

Yes, we agree. *However*, for many homeowners – especially those in the stack garages – it will be cost-prohibitive for them to upgrade the electrical panel and circuits to support an EV charger, or even a 220V outlet in their garage.

Providing these EV chargers as a new amenity for our residents – *at no cost to the HOA* – is a viable option for those who can't afford to upgrade their garage's electrical infrastructure and would like to use an EV charger in our community.

NOTE: Yes, there are some stack residents who currently charge an EV in their garage. But, the stack garages are wired with a single 15-amp wire that is *shared* across multiple garages – which is electricity that is currently covered by the HOA, and not the stack homeowners.

(All stack garage electricity are on shared SoCal Edison meters which is electricity use that is paid for by the HOA, and not the individual stack condo homeowners.)

As the number of stack residents with EVs increase, the shared 15-amp wire will not be able to supply enough electricity to those EVs that are charging on the same wire. When this happens, the electric panel's breaker to those garages will trip, shutting off power to the garages. *This, BTW, has already started to happen with some of our stack garage buildings.*

The only way to avoid overloading the stack garage wiring is for the stack homeowner with an EV to pay to upgrade the wiring to their garage. But this can be cost prohibitive.

Rancho San Joaquin

This is not an issue with the townhome garages in which those garages are separately wired and whose electricity use is covered by the townhome owners. However, the townhome garage wiring is also only 15-amps and may not be enough to fully charge an EV each day, depending on the size of the EV, the owner's driving habits and miles driven each day or week.

Won't these community chargers will attract "outsiders" to our community who will use the chargers?

No. Our chargers will be restricted to our HOA residents only. As discussed in [our July 21, 2023 email newsletter](#), after registering, the HOA resident will be issued a uniquely identified magnetic card in which he/she "taps" the card on the charger to activate it. Without it, our chargers cannot be used.

Further, the card will be linked to the resident's credit or debit card to pay for the electricity. This means the card cannot be freely "shared" with others since the resident's credit or debit card will be used to pay for the charge.



Won't the Nuevo and Viejo guest parking be restricted to those using the community chargers?

No. The guest parking will continue to be available for HOA guests. And our HOA parking rules will still apply in which vehicles must be safelisted with Patrol Masters for temporary overnight parking. In addition, there are a number of nearby curbside spaces for guest parking.

Why can't we install solar panels on top of the stack garages to supply additional electricity?

Solar panels won't solve the problem. Think of the stack garages' existing 15-amp, shared wiring as narrow water pipes. You could install a thousand solar panels on the top of the stack garages, but that additional electricity still has to be delivered through those "water pipes". And no matter how hard you try, you can't "shove" additional electricity through the 15-amp wiring because 15-amps is all that they can handle.

Rancho San Joaquin

Why can't the stack garage infrastructure be upgraded instead?

In early 2022, two Board members met with several electrical power experts and submetering companies to research upgrading the stack garage infrastructure.

At that time, it was estimated that upgrading the 152 stack garages with new, dedicated circuits, breakers, and sub-panels will conservatively cost about \$500,000 to \$700,000 – *which is Reserve money that the HOA does not have, nor is it part of our current Reserve Study savings plan.* Also, this 2022 estimated cost has gone up each year due to inflationary increases in labor and material costs.

This cost doesn't include the likely cost to upgrade the main panel next to the stack garages on each street. Nor does it include the cost to purchase & install 13 new SCE meters and main panels for the stack garage buildings (because it may not be possible to upgrade the main panels).

But, the biggest challenge may be SCE's main transformer station which is located near University and Culver. The transformer supplies electricity to our community – *i.e., homes, garages, street lights, outdoor lights, landscape irrigation controllers, and pool facilities.* According to SCE's estimates, upgrading the stack garage circuits to 220V may exceed the capacity of their transformer in which upgrading it will cost millions.

But given that the term of our SCE Charge Ready contract is 10 years, by that time, our HOA *may* have the “extra” Reserve cash and an affordable solution to upgrade our stack garage infrastructure – *but only if the HOA further increases its contribution to its reserve savings beyond what is recommended in our reserve study.*

In the meantime, these community EV chargers will serve as a new amenity for our homeowners & residents – at no cost to the HOA! 😊

(Note that SCE has received over 5,000 Charge Ready applications from other HOA communities and other multi-family developments like ours.)

Won't the HOA will have to cover the maintenance costs for the community chargers? Also, isn't it true that SCE will raise our electricity rates as a result of these chargers?

No and no. Per our signed contract with [EVgateway](#), they will cover all of the maintenance & repair costs and the annual software & network fees. They will fix our chargers remotely or send someone out to make the repair – again, at no cost to the HOA. And, the HOA will earn a small percentage of the charging revenue to help cover our operating expenses. 😊

SCE is not going to raise our electricity rates after installing the chargers. Their Charge Ready program is separately funded and will not affect our rates – *which BTW, are set by the [California Public Utilities Commission](#), and not SCE.*