## REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI) from the Florida Dept. of Transportation

This RFI is being issued by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to solicit feedback and recommendations for the planning, coordination, and development of electric vehicle charging infrastructure within the State of Florida. The FDOT is currently developing a Statewide EV Infrastructure Deployment Plan, which is in response to the recent The National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Formula Program Guidance authorized under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). As such, the purpose of this RFI is to collect input from potential market participants across varying sectors to obtain information on how to best support the deployment for direct current fast charge (DCFC) electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE).

### Background

According to Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guidance for the NEVI formula program under the BIL, Florida can expect to receive $198 million in federal funding between 2022-2026. While formula funds are essentially guaranteed for each state, the BIL requires each state DOT to submit an EV Infrastructure Deployment Plan which details how the NEVI formula funds will be utilized consistent with FHWA guidance on developing charging networks along designated alternative fuel corridors (AFC's). Responses from this RFI will be used to inform FDOT's Statewide EV Infrastructure Deployment Plan as well as future competitive solicitations.

Respondents are requested to not provide proposals or marketing material and should instead focus on providing detailed answers to the questions in this RFI. Respondents may also choose to abstain from answering questions that may not be relevant to them. Furthermore, the purpose of this RFI is for information-gathering purposes only; FDOT will not select a vendor for DCFC EVSE deployment based on responses to this RFI. No contracts will result from this RFI.

### Information Requested:

#### ***General***

**1. Please describe your organization's involvement and experience with DCFC infrastructure. What are your long-term EV plans? How many chargers and/or charging stations are you able to build, install, and/or maintain on an annual basis?**

- **7-Eleven is a globally recognized convenience store leader,** with a solid record of offering quality products, including fuels, along with excellent customer experiences.
- 7-Eleven began adding **EV fast charging stations to its stores** across the U.S. and Canada in 2016.
- Currently **7-Eleven has charging stations available at stores in 7 states (CA, OR, TX, IL, NY, FL and CO**). **7-Eleven has its own fast charging network, called 7Charge, currently available in 4 states, including Florida.** Having its own EV charging network allows 7-Eleven to ensure reliable, well-maintained chargers that provide customers with a consistent, positive charging experience, while also having the convenience of amenities.
- The 7-Eleven DC Fast Charging (DCFC) program will be **operated with the same reliability and standards as 7-Eleven's convenience store and fueling business,** which has a near century old history of success.

- With nearly a century of experience delivering goods and fuels on a national scale, our expertise makes 7-Eleven **an ideal partner to help bring DCFC services to your state's communities and highways.**

**2. Where does your organization see the biggest opportunities for the utilization of NEVI funds? This could be in terms of innovative technology solutions, partnerships, and/or targeting geographic locations.**

- **NEVI funds should be used to encourage and enable more widespread adoption of EVs.** The investment of NEVI funds to alleviate range anxiety and to expand access to EV charging are critical to the rapid and equitable transition to a cleaner transportation sector.
- Specifically, **NEVI funds should be used to offset the high upfront costs** associated with installing publicly available DCFC along designated corridors and in communities with limited access to EV charging.
- NEVI funds should also be **strategically deployed to support the operating costs** of DCFC in locations that deliver significant public benefit, but face challenging economics **(e.g. low utilization, high demand charges).**

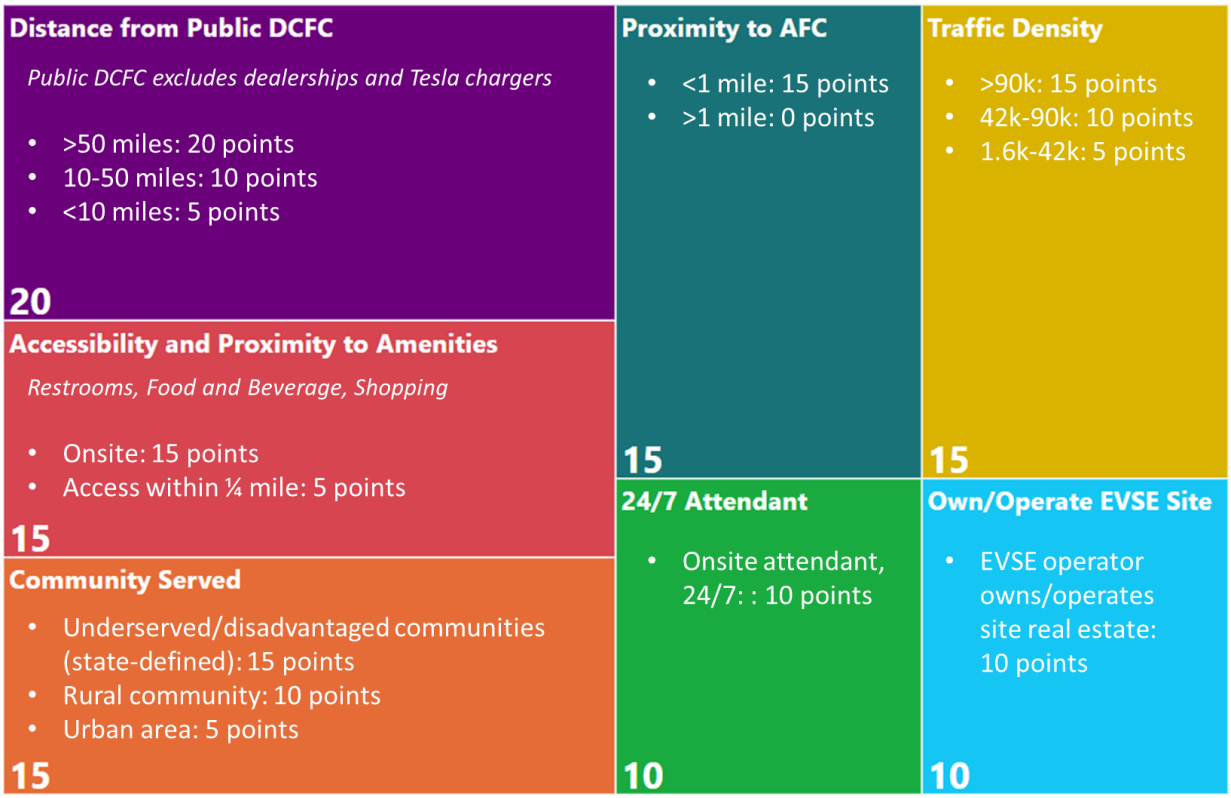
**3. What are the biggest challenges or barriers that should be addressed to expedite reaching the goals of the NEVI program?**

- Long lead times for DCFC equipment due to supply chain challenges are a market reality today. Given these delays for acquiring charging equipment, FDOT should do everything in its power to **help expedite the DCFC deployment process**. For example, **addressing lengthy local permitting and inspection processes and timelines** will help to move projects forward more quickly.
- **High utility demand charges are also a barrier to wide-spread deployment**. Working closely with local utilities and state utility commissions to address the demand costs will enable the private sector to meet the goals of the NEVI program not only in the near term, but provide market reliability into the future.

## ***Site Location***

**4. Please describe what you believe makes an ideal DCFC location including amenities as well as any risk factors that should be considered. How would you rank the relative importance of these factors?**

- The ideal DCFC location **is convenient, safe, and reliable, with well-lit parking spaces and 24/7 access to onsite food, beverages, and restrooms.**
- Additionally, the 24/7 presence of an onsite attendant creates **a safer environment** and makes it easy for customers to flag any issues with EV charging equipment.
- DCFC projects in which the **operator also owns/operates the site real estate offer the advantage of faster project completion timelines.** It also reduces the issues with who has what responsibility and liability as the project is maintained and operated into the future.
- As states work to finalize their Transportation Electrification Plans (TEPs) and determine how to best invest NEVI funds, 7-Eleven offers the following example of a **scoring criteria** to assist in the process of project evaluation. This criterion is built from best practices learned nationwide and is adjusted specifically for Florida's opportunities and needs.




**5. Please describe your process, including market research, land use requirements, and business development opportunities for determining a DCFC site location.**

**6. What do you think the DCFC site of the future looks like? Will location to amenities be as important or will micromobility be used to get to the amenities? What innovations/disrupters are coming?**

## ***Partnerships and Business Models***

**7. Please explain any previous partnerships regarding EV infrastructure your organization has had including which parties initiated the outreach and what, if any, contracting mechanisms were used. These should include public and private entities as well as utility owners.**

- 7-Eleven has worked in **partnership with third-party charging providers** on the installation, operation, and maintenance of DCFC at 7-Eleven stores, as well as **participated in utility EV charging make-ready programs with Southern California Edison (CA), Pacific Gas & Electric (CA) and Xcel Energy (CO)**. To date these partnerships have been successful and provided valuable experience and learnings regarding customer charging behavior, for all parties. In addition**, 7-Eleven has won multiple grants (9) through the FL Department of Environmental Protection's Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVIC) program.**

**8. Describe what makes a successful business model and partnership. Also, please describe threats that can lead to a business and partnership's failure. These can be examples from current and/or previous partnerships.**

- 7-Eleven has enjoyed **strong partnerships with many state DOTs, environmental agencies, and utilities**. These partnerships have succeeded in large part to clear communication of expectations, project specifications, timelines, and reporting requirements. Within 7-Eleven's EV team there is dedicated staff covering all aspects of projects; utilities, incentives/grants, siting and planning, preconstruction, and construction. This allows for expertise from partners to be paired with EV experts inside of 7-Eleven.
- One of the **largest threats to a successful DCFC business is unreliable service**. The recent published findings on downtime of existing DCFC stations in operation are concerning. 7-Eleven is bucking this trend with high reliability and uptime with its existing DCFC chargers in operation. As with every facet of the 7-Eleven business, EV drivers who fast charge at a 7-Eleven store are experiencing reliable, convenient, and available charging services. EV Charging at 7-Eleven is not an add-on vendor opportunity, but rather, is a core product offering that complete enterprise support.

**9. Please provide your organization's viewpoints on contracting methods for DCFC infrastructure, including leasing and/or revenue sharing agreements. Have you implemented any cost/revenue sharing models for the operation of DCFC EVSE? If yes, please share what you can about the terms of those partnerships.**

**10.Does Florida have the workforce required to operate and maintain DCFC EVSE charging sites? If not, please describe what you think is required to develop it**

## ***Equipment***

**11. On average, how long does it take to install a DCFC from start to finish? This includes site determination, design, permitting, site preparation, utilities, and installation.**

- Project **timelines vary greatly by the jurisdiction and the utility** servicing the site. There can be disruptions in delivery from both utilities and jurisdictions based on external factors such as: hurricanes, local jurisdictional priorities, etc. These are uncontrolled timelines for any EV provider. **Industry averages anywhere from 12-24 months.**
- Site determination and design are typically **completed quickly** in the 7-Eleven site selection process, as **we control our real estate** – we do not have the uncertainty of lease negotiation timeframes, and can move to permitting faster than the majority of our competitors. 7-Eleven has built a talented EV team within corporate operations so to nimbly work through all areas of EV project management and construction and have embedded resources in major reconstruction and new construction services within the enterprise.

**12. Are you currently able to meet the requirements of Buy America for DCFC infrastructure projects? If not, please explain your plans to meet the requirements and any potential issues.**

- Due to domestic production and supply chain limitations, **procuring Buy America-compliant components is resulting in higher project costs and longer project timelines**. Additionally, Buy America requirements may delay install dates based off manufacturing timelines. 7-Eleven is currently working with its partners to identify pathways that will result in timely, cost-effective DCFC deployment that satisfies Buy America requirements.

**13. Are there any components required for DCFC infrastructure that are in short supply that could delay the goals of the NEVI program? Please describe what steps you have taken or what processes you have implemented to ensure the continuity of your supply chain.**

**14. Please describe how your organization mitigates cybersecurity vulnerabilities. Is this consistent with industry standards? If not, where are the differences? Do you follow national cybersecurity standards including National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Cybersecurity Framework? Do you comply with Florida's 60GG-2 for ensuring the security of your infrastructure? What other technologies do you offer for an end-to-end secured operation?**

## ***Operation, Maintenance and Data Sharing***

**15.What are your current or planned fee structures (time-based, energy-based, power-based, etc.) and what payment mechanism do you accept? Please explain any issues you have encountered or identified.**

**16. Describe the typical maintenance for your organization's EVSE infrastructure as well as the maintenance schedule including any required hardware and software updates. Please include the typical lifecycle for your DCFC and what performance measurements are monitored.**

- 7-Eleven's DCFC equipment and software receive the same level of **exceptional care and maintenance** that 7-Eleven dedicates to its stores and fueling infrastructure. With nearly a century of experience owning and operating real estate and retail, EV charging infrastructure is already embedded into store maintenance and service.
- The 7-Eleven team **continually analyzes the charging data** received from existing DCFC stations to ensure current chargers are performing effectively.
- **7-Eleven purchases extended warranties on our DCFCs** to ensure we have supplier support when issues arise in the field.
- The 7-Eleven team **monitors and evaluates transactional data** to ensure that future DCFC installations are designed and located to meet customer needs.

**17.How would your EVSE share data to a FDOT sponsored central data repository? What type(s) of data can you provide?**

**18.What should FDOT do to ensure the end-users of EVSE infrastructure have the most convenient and reliable charging experience? Please include how emergency evacuations and power outages should be addressed.**

## ***Strategies for Low Utilization***

**19. FDOT is looking to provide DCFC in rural and disadvantaged communities that may have a lower return on investment and is interested in how to make these projects more desirable to potential applications. What strategies can FDOT utilize to encourage deployment of DCFC EVSE into rural, underserved, or disadvantaged communities? When answering please include information on driving factors.**

- Guaranteed number of projects for **economies of scale**. Building a few one-off projects increases costs.
- Designate funds to support operational expenses. For example, designate funds to help **reduce/offset high utility demand charges.**

**20. To increase utilization rates to rural, underserved, or disadvantages communities what considerations or innovation solutions should be considered?**

- To support DCFC providers in these communities, FDOT should work with utilities and state regulators to **institute appropriate demand charge alternatives.** NEVI funds can also be deployed to support operational expenses of DCFC in these priority locations.
- Increasing utilization rates in rural, underserved, and disadvantaged communities will require **policy interventions to support broader adoption of EVs**. While EV ownership may remain low in some of these communities, providing access to EV charging through public DCFC installations is critical.
- Ensuring that **NEVI-funded DCFC deployments are located on sites with amenities** like convenience stores and restrooms. As EV ride-share driving is growing as a economic opportunity for many, the access to cost effective and reliable charging where other resources (food/water, shelter, bathroom, Wi-Fi, etc.) are easily accessible will continue to grow the industry and local economic prosperity.

## ***Specific Information Requested***

Interested vendors may respond to some or all the following topics, based on their proposed role in the creation of a DCFC EVSE network:

*1. Summary of Experience*
FDOT is interested in a summary that describes your organization's experience with DCFC EVSE.

*2. System Block Diagram*
FDOT is interested in a high-level system block diagram that illustrates all components and connections required to create the proposed system.

*3. Hardware Information*
FDOT is interested in datasheets and technical specifications for components included and required to create a typical DCFC system.

*4. Software Information*
FDOT is interested in information on software components included and needed to create a typical DCFC system.

*5. Maintenance Plan*
FDOT is interested to know about the maintenance services and typical maintenance schedule for DCFC infrastructure.

*6. Project Approach*
FDOT is interested in the approach that your organization would take to deliver the DCFC EVSE. The Department may exercise the choice to invite each vendor that responds to the questions above to meet and discuss the information provided in more detail.

Please Email Responses to: Co.Purch@dot.state.fl.us
Subject Line: DOT-RFI-22-9114-PB
Please note there is a 25MB limit on emails received by the Department.
&
**Please provide <u>one copy</u> of the response to this RFI on a non-returnable flash drive.**

**Contact for Questions or clarification:**
Please email Paul Baker at co.purch@dot.state.fl.us with any questions or comments

**The requested information must be received by 5:00 pm (EST) on June 28, 2022.**

Send to: The Department of Transportation
Attention: Paul Baker
Subject: DCFC EVSE
Mailing Address:605 Suwannee Street, MS20, Tallahassee, FL 32399

PLEASE NOTE:

1) Responses to this Request for Information (RFI) will be reviewed by the agency for informational purposes and will not be considered as offers to be accepted by the agency to form a binding contract.
2) The Department may contact respondents that respond to the questions to discuss product information in further detail.
3) Information obtained in response to this RFI is public record as defined by Chapter 119, Florida Statutes (F.S.).
4) In accordance with Section 287.057, F.S., information obtained in response to this RFI may be used to develop scope and solicitation documents for future procurements at the discretion of the Department. Respondents eligible to respond to this RFI will remain eligible for any subsequent related contract with the agency.
5) Advertisement of any subsequent competitive solicitation that may result from this RFI will be posted on the Florida Vendor Bid System.

If the responses to this RFI are subject to non-disclosure, then the Proposer must include any materials it asserts to be exempted from the public disclosure under Chapter 119, Florida Statutes, in a separate bound document labeled “Confidential Materials”. The proposer must identify the specific Statute that authorizes exemption from the Public Records Lay. Any claim to confidentiality on materials the Proposer asserts to be exempt from public disclosure and placed elsewhere in the proposal will be considered waived by the Proposer upon submission, effective after opening