

Laurel Apartments at Mercantile Exchange in Downtown St. Louis

Industry Solution: Multi-Dwelling Units

The Laurel Apartments, like many property management companies wanted to provide electric vehicle (EV) charging for tenants as a way to distinguish its brand, protect and increase occupancy rates, and create new revenue streams. Additionally, the property management works with WeCar by Enterprise to promote car sharing in the downtown area. ChargePoint offers a solution specifically designed to provide charging services to tenants. The ChargePoint® Commercial Plan is a subscription-based solution for managing EV charging stations and services. It includes everything property owners need to offer charging services, including all tenant support and billing. It allows station owners to set up EV charging exactly as they need it, to track consumption by tenant, manage costs and maximize profitability.

Needs

Preferential parking for EVs and the welcoming of low emission vehicles was an important factor in building the Laurel Apartments an ambitious and modern new development located in the heart of revitalized downtown St. Louis.

ChargePoint Solution Used

During the initial building phase, they installed a dual-port ChargePoint CT2021 for use with two charging spots, one reserved for tenant and public EV charging, the other reserved for WeCar, a car-sharing program in St. Louis that includes a Nissan LEAF™.

The Customer

Laurel Apartments at Mercantile Exchange in downtown St. Louis is located in the heart of the city. The neighborhood attracts more than 10 million visitors to the area each year with nearby destinations including Busch Stadium, the iconic Gateway Arch and America's Center.

The installation of a charging station for EV and the multitude of benefits of ChargePoint is the perfect starting point to welcome electric vehicles into Missouri. After a three-year development delay, the LEED-certified building project was underway in 2008 and opened to the public in late 2011. The Laurel Apartments include the first five floors that is a 212-room Embassy Suites Hotel and the remaining floors used for residential living.

There is a planned expansion of the developments retail opening in the second half of 2012, the MX is developing into a full-service retail, dining, entertainment, arts and culture and residential district along Washington Avenue. Future tenants will include a 23,000-square-foot National Blues Museum, MX Movies, Pi Pizzeria, Robust Wine Bar, Takaya New Asian, Snarf's Sandwiches, and a fashion/design retail concept called The Collective.

The Challenge

Construction began on the MX project in 2008 with the goal of becoming LEED certified. The decision was made in 2011 to include a charging station in the design of the project. The epicenter of downtown energy and nightlife, the building now boasts downtown St. Louis' first public ChargePoint charging station for EVs.

“Having preferential parking for EVs and low emission vehicles as well as installing the charging station has attracted new residents to downtown by making sustainable living in an urban environment easier,” said Steve Metherd Development Project Manager for Spinnaker St. Louis. “Both are also key components of the building’s Comprehensive Transportation Management Plan, aimed to reduce single-occupancy vehicles in downtown and emphasize the ways new developments can be greener, LEED certified buildings.”

In the summer of 2011, the decision was made to install a charging station. The property developers worked closely with Microgrid Energy, the Midwest clean energy leader, offering solar installations and ChargePoint cloud-based software solutions. Microgrid is a ChargePoint reseller and was selected to find the right solution and installation for the project. The ChargePoint CT2021 charging station was selected for the initial installation phase.

The Solution

The ChargePoint CT2021 dual-port charging station provides two 7.2 kW (208/240 V @ 30 A) Level 2 charging ports and are designed for public outdoor applications for the North American marketplace. Charging is delivered via standard SAE J1772™ connectors. To enhance safety and eliminate energy theft, drivers access and energize the station using a ChargePoint RFID card or any contactless credit card. The station’s highly visible display guides drivers with instructive messages and can be used to display custom advertisement or greetings for drivers.

The charging stations also utilize ChargePoint’s cloud-based software application services. The solution allows the Laurel Apartments to set pricing and collect fees, provide 24/7 driver assistance, control access, enable reservations, display advertisements, track usage, and monitor the station remotely. The Laurel Apartments are not currently charging their tenants for the use of the parking space and will determine the cost of charging at a later time. WeCar charges an initial \$35 per year signup fee and \$8.00 each hour the vehicle is used. Individuals must pay for the charging and parking Nissan LEAF™ if they park the car somewhere besides its dedicated spot at The Laurel.

The Result

The residence now has two dedicated charging spots for EV parking that includes a dual-port ChargePoint charging station. One spot is dedicated for tenant and public EV charging and the other for dedicated to the WeCar car-sharing program. With the charging station in place, the MX plans to host a fully electric Nissan LEAF™ vehicle, through St. Louis-based WeCar by Enterprise Holdings. Though downtown has Toyota Prius WeCars, the MX WeCar will be the first all-electric vehicle in WeCars automated, membership-based and environmentally friendly transportation solution.

“Every major auto manufacturer is preparing to offer an EV. So building an infrastructure to support environmentally friendly vehicles is critical,” said Amos Harris, president of Spinnaker St. Louis.