

Street lighting, car-charging system shown in UK

19 June 2015, by Nancy Owano



Here is an Idea: a street lighting system with integrated electric vehicle charging. The idea is from the BMW Group and they showcased the idea in action this month at the MINI plant in Oxford, UK. They have worked up a street lighting system which doubles as a charging station for electric vehicles (EVs). The system is known as "Light & Charge." It is the result of a pilot project that the BMW group developed. (MINI is one of BMW's Group's three brands, BMW, MINI and Rolls-Royce.)

This system was demonstrated for the first time in the UK during the city's second Low [Carbon](#) Oxford Week. There are numerous events planned to June 21, to inspire residents to take action against climate change and help save money.

How Light & Charge works: An EV charging cable connects to a standard connector on the Light & Charge street light. The integrated control panel allows drivers, regardless of vehicle model, to start charging with the swipe of a card.

The LED street light is more energy-efficient than

conventional [street lighting](#) and provides better illumination, the group said. "LED technology allows more targeted light distribution with highly uniform illumination to increase road safety and is optimized for minimum glare and light pollution."

BMW made note of its cost-effective features. It can, after all, be grafted straight onto existing local street lighting infrastructure, increasing the numbers of public charging stations as well. The Group referred to its "modular" design, which can be tailored to different locations.

"EV charging stations can be set up at any location where suitable parking is available, simply by replacing conventional street lights with Light & Charge systems," said the press release. Night-time lighting on main roads can be realized with up to four LED modules. One or two modules are enough to provide lighting on side streets and in residential areas.

The Group said Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City Council were working in partnership, in an effort to increase the uptake of ultra-low emission vehicles.

In December, Electric & Hybrid Vehicle Technology Expo, a showcase for electric and hybrid vehicle technology, carried a newsletter report about the BMW Group's system pairing LED streetlights with EV charging. The report discussed its Munich prototypes and said that BMW at the time was talking to potential future development partners across different industries as well as the public and private sector for potential pilot projects in 2015. Project Manager, Johan Schwind said, "As infrastructure gets more connected and more [intelligent](#) we're looking at emerging technologies (especially sensors for the urban environment) that can be built into our system to offer useful services to citizens and cities."

Writing about the UK showing this month,

meanwhile, Andrew Liszewski in Gizmodo observed that "even though the initial cost of the new streetlights and installation would be high, over time they could easily pay for themselves and be a genuine source of income for a city."

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