PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Stephanie Terrell was excited to join the wave of drivers adopting electric vehicles when she bought a used Nissan Leaf this fall.

But Terrell encountered a bump in the road on her journey to clean driving: As a renter, she doesn’t have a place to plug in overnight, and the public charging stations near her are often in use. The 23-year-old nearly ran out of power on the freeway recently because a charging station she was counting on was busy.

“It was really scary and I was really worried I wasn’t going to make it,” she said. “I feel better about it than buying gas, but there are problems I didn’t really anticipate.”

The transition to electric vehicles is underway for homeowners who can power up in their own garage, but for millions of renters, access to charging remains a significant barrier. Now, cities across the U.S. are trying to come up with innovative public charging solutions as drivers string power cords across sidewalks, erect private charging stations on city right-of-ways and queue at public facilities.

The Biden administration last month approved plans from all 50 states to roll out a network of high-speed chargers along interstate highways using $5 billion in federal funding over the next five years. But states must wait to apply for an additional $2.5 billion in local grants to fill in charging gaps, including in dense urban areas.

“We have a really large challenge right now with making it easy for people to charge who live in apartments,” said Jeff Allen, executive director of Forth, a nonprofit that advocates for equity in electric vehicle ownership and charging access.

Cities have to understand that “promoting electric cars is also part of their sustainable transportation strategy. Once they make that mental shift, there’s a whole bunch of very tangible things they can — and should — be doing.”

Fast chargers, also known as DC Fast, can fill up a car in 45 minutes or less. But slower Level 2 chargers, which take several hours, still outnumber DC fast chargers nearly four to one. Charging on a standard residential outlet, or Level 1 charger, isn’t practical unless you drive little or can leave the car plugged in overnight.

Nationwide, there are about 120,000 public charging ports featuring Level 2 charging or above, and nearly 1.5 million electric vehicles registered in the U.S. — a ratio of just over one charger per 12 cars nationally, according to the latest U.S. Department of Energy data.

A briefing prepared for the U.S. Department of Energy last year by the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory forecasts a total of just under 19 million electric vehicles on the road by 2030, with a projected need for an extra 9.6 million charging stations.

In Los Angeles, for example, nearly one-quarter of all new vehicles registered in July were plug-in. The city estimates in the next two decades, it must expand its distribution capacity anywhere from 25 percent to 50 percent, with roughly two-thirds of the increased demand coming from EVs, said Yamen Nanne, manager of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power’s transportation electrification program.

Amid the boom, dense city neighborhoods are rapidly becoming pressure points.