



Office of the City Manager

INFORMATION CALENDAR

February 5, 2013

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From:  Christine Daniel, City Manager

Submitted by: Eric Angstadt, Director, Planning and Development

Subject: Non-Residential Plug-in Electric Vehicle (PEV) Charging Station Pilot Program

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to inform City Council of a new Pilot Program that establishes a streamlined process for permitting plug-in electric vehicle (PEV) charging station installations on private non-residential property. The program was designed in response to a December 13, 2011 Council referral that directed the City Manager to return to Council with recommendations for an expedited permit process for installing PEV charging equipment on private commercial property.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The Non-Residential Plug-in Electric Vehicle Charging Station Pilot Program streamlines the permitting process by creating a clear, fast, and coordinated pathway for applicants interested in providing PEV charging. The Pilot Program is open to existing non-residential properties, in commercial or manufacturing districts, with off-street parking lots or structures. Any PEV charging stations installed by Pilot Program participants will serve existing parking spaces to create dedicated PEV charging spaces that must comply with accessibility, safety, and signage requirements while allowing for flexibility in PEV charging station type and specific details about its use. It is anticipated that most Pilot Program applicants will create 1 or 2 dedicated PEV charging spaces (served by 1 or 2 charging stations). In parking lots of over 20 spaces, this Pilot Program will consider projects that designate up to 12% of existing parking spaces as PEV charging spaces. Staff anticipates 10 or fewer installation locations over the 2 year duration of the Pilot Program; the Zoning Administrator may opt to alter or suspend the Pilot Program at any time.

Applicants are directed to contact staff in Office of Energy & Sustainable Development (OESD) if interested in participating in the Pilot Program. All Pilot Program materials, included as attachments here, are available on-line and at the Permit Service Center (PSC). The Pilot Program Guide outlines the requirements of the program and how it works. Applications will be reviewed by OESD staff and approval will be granted by the Zoning Administrator through a Zoning Certificate. Building and Safety will then issue

electrical permits, typically in an over-the-counter process. This permitting process is anticipated to take less than two weeks total.

Pilot Program applicants must supply detailed information about their parking and PEV charging station set-up through the attached Questionnaire as part of their Application and must also agree to complete periodic (up to 2-3 per year) surveys. These follow-up surveys on PEV charging station use, parking lot activity, and customer feedback will provide valuable data for evaluating the impact of this Pilot Program and shaping long-term City policy. In this time when PEV adoption is known to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but PEV and charging station technology is still evolving, this Pilot Program can work to advance both short- and long-term goals.

BACKGROUND

As identified in the December 13, 2011 Council referral, the City has historically treated a PEV charging station in the parking lot of a private commercial property as a separate use, subject to an Administrative Use Permit (AUP) or a Use Permit (UP) if adjacent to a residential district. The time and expense required to obtain an AUP or UP deterred potential PEV charging station installations in Berkeley, particularly when neighboring municipalities allowed for PEV charging station installations with a simple over-the-counter electrical permit. Unintentionally, this situation acted as a barrier to the Climate Action Plan (CAP) goal of encouraging the use of low-carbon vehicles and fuels.

As a result, several divisions in the Department of Planning and Development, including the OESD, the Land Use Planning Division, and Building and Safety, worked together to develop and launch this new Pilot Program. The Pilot Program achieves the requested expedited permit process in the short-term while also creating a mechanism to collect data on the usage and impact of the PEV charging stations.

POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

Data collected during the two-year implementation of the Pilot Program will be used to inform future policy and regulations for PEV infrastructure. This local data, available through the Pilot Program, will compliment regional guidance currently under development by Bay Area Air Quality Management District and State initiatives supporting the creation of PEV infrastructure.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

No significant fiscal impacts are anticipated at this time.

CONTACT PERSON

Sarah Moore, Assistant Planner, Planning and Development, 510-981-7494

Attachments:

- 1: Pilot Program Guide
- 2: Pilot Program Application and Questionnaire