

DEPARTMENT OF
CITY PLANNING
COMMISSION OFFICE
(213) 978-1300

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

MONIQUE LAWSHE
PRESIDENT

MICHAEL R. NEWHOUSE
VICE-PRESIDENT

MARIA CABILDO
CAROLINE CHOE
MARTINA DIAZ
PHYLLIS KLEIN
KAREN MACK
JACOB SAIMAN
ELIZABETH ZAMORA

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

CALIFORNIA



KAREN BASS
MAYOR

EXECUTIVE OFFICES
200 N. SPRING STREET, ROOM 525
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012-4801
(213) 978-1271

VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP
DIRECTOR

SHANA M.M. BONSTIN
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

HAYDEE URITA-LOPEZ
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

ARTHI L. VARMA, AICP
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

LISA M. WEBBER, AICP
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

October 24, 2024

Los Angeles City Council
c/o Office of the City Clerk
City Hall, Room 395
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Honorable Members:

REPORT BACK ON RECOMMENDATIONS RELATIVE TO ADVERTISING IN PRIVATE PARKING LOTS AND AWAY FROM THE PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY; CF 22-0120-S1

SUMMARY

On January 27, 2023, the City Council instructed the Department of City Planning (DCP), in consultation with the Department of Building and Safety (DBS) and the City Attorney, to provide recommendations for drafting an ordinance to define allowable electric vehicle (EV) charging for all appropriate zones in the City. In addition, the Department of City Planning was instructed to report on best practices from other jurisdictions, including recommendations for urban design standards consistent with the Citywide Design Guidelines for pedestrian design, 360-degree design, and climate adaptive design that promote a high-quality pedestrian environment and improve interactions with the public realm.

On June 18, 2024, DCP staff presented their recommendations to the Planning and Land Use Management (PLUM) Committee of the City Council. At the meeting, the PLUM Committee amended DCP's recommendations to add a fourth action to instruct the Department of City Planning and any other relevant departments to report back within 45 days with recommendations relative to "advertising in private parking lots and away from the public right-of-way." On July 2, 2024, the City Council adopted the PLUM Committee's report.

This report will directly address the City Council's fourth instruction. As the topic of this council file (CF 22-0120-S1) is focused on EV charging, this report will directly address digital off-site signage in EV charging facilities.

As will be explained in this report, “on-site signs” are generally allowed in the City subject to sign regulations, whereas “off-site signs” are prohibited citywide and only permitted under very limited circumstances as set forth in the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC).

The City Council adopted a citywide ban on off-site signs in 2002 in an effort to curtail the visual blight caused by the proliferation of billboards and off-site advertisements throughout the City. Few exceptions to this ban exist, the primary one being a Sign District. A Sign District allows the Department of City Planning, the City Planning Commission (CPC), and the City Council to ensure that any signs within adopted Sign Districts are compatible with the surrounding area through the imposition of carefully tailored development standards. Together, the ban and Sign Districts allow the City to review off-site signs in a nuanced and localized manner with great discretion through a legislative process.

Any exemption to the City’s off-site sign regulations for any commercial business model – especially without a clear and apparent public benefit – would contradict the intention of the City’s sign regulations. Furthermore, the adoption of an EV Charging Ordinance to establish EV uses in the LAMC is the Department of City Planning’s main priority, given the clear and time-sensitive need for new public EV chargers in the City as a result of the growing EV market and the State and City’s climate and energy goals that encourage EV adoption. Discussions with multiple EV charging operators have indicated that clear zoning regulations and a predictable approval process will help them install more EV chargers in the City. Incorporating EV charging definitions and uses into the LAMC can further promote the installation of new EV chargers in the City, regardless of off-site sign provisions.

Therefore, the Department of City Planning proposes the following recommendation:

1. Instruct the Department of City Planning, in coordination with the Department of Building and Safety and City Attorney, to continue with instructions 1, 2, and 3 of the PLUM Committee report for CF 22-0120-S1 dated June 18, 2024 as adopted by the City Council on July 2, 2024.
2. Instruct the City Administrative Officer, in coordination with the Department of City Planning, to prepare a report with recommendations as to funding sources and the fiscal impact up to \$150,000 for the preparation of the environmental impact analysis required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

BACKGROUND

EV Charging Facilities

As instructed by the City Council, the Department of City Planning is initiating a work program to draft an ordinance to define EV charging as an allowable use in the LAMC. The Zoning Code, Chapter 1 of the LAMC, currently does not define nor contain any regulations pertaining to EV charging. The ordinance will establish new zoning and land use regulations for EV charging facilities, such as applicable zones, approval processes, and development standards. The intent of this ordinance is to ensure that all new EV charging facilities are compatible with the existing City landscape and the public realm.

There are two types of EV charging facilities: accessory use and primary use. Accessory use facilities are located in parking lots belonging to another primary use, such as commercial stores, shopping centers, office buildings, and residential buildings. These EV chargers are used by the patrons, employees, or residents of the primary use. In primary use EV charging facilities, EV charging is the main – and sometimes only – use on the site. Some primary use projects may contain an accompanying amenity, such as restrooms, a waiting area, and/or a commercial use, such as a convenience store or restaurant.

Signs in Some EV Charging Facilities

Some EV chargers may contain a digital display on its side and/or user interface which can display on- and off-site advertisements.¹ The amount and type of advertising depends entirely on the operator; however, not all EV charging operators utilize signage in their business model. One EV charging operator, ChargePoint, displays advertisements in conjunction with three- to five-minute videos with news, weather, and original content. Volta, another EV charging operator, follows a similar model and also may also display public messaging. EV chargers may also show advertisements for the business in which they are located. For example, an EV charger in a grocery store parking lot may show advertisements for products sold in the grocery store.

Displays on EV chargers can be of varying sizes, which could allow them to be seen from the public right-of-way. They can also attract a wide audience, given that they can be seen by charger users, other drivers, and pedestrians alike. There is also the potential to broadcast a significant amount of images, videos, and advertisements through these displays.

¹ Patrick Coffee, "EV Charging-Station Operators Set to Battle for Ad Dollars," The Wall Street Journal, August 25, 2022, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/ev-charging-station-operators-set-to-battle-for-ad-dollars-11661421601>.

Current Sign Regulations (Article 4.4 of Chapter 1 of the LAMC and Section 101.5 of the LABC)

The majority of the City's sign regulations are found in Article 4.4 of Chapter 1 of the LAMC. Article 4.4 defines various sign related terms and outlines regulations for a variety of sign typologies. These regulations concern maintenance, illumination, hazard to traffic, area, height, location, and projection, among other requirements.

Within Article 4.4, Section 14.4.2 contains definitions for signs and sign-related terms. Some of those definitions relevant to advertisements in EV charging facilities are:

- **Sign:** Any whole or part of a display board, wall, screen or object, used to announce, declare, demonstrate, display or otherwise present a message and attract the attention of the public.
- **Off-Site Sign:** A sign that displays any message directing attention to a business, product, service, profession, commodity, activity, event, person, institution or any other commercial message, which is generally conducted, sold, manufactured, produced, offered or occurs elsewhere than on the premises where the sign is located.
- **On-Site Sign:** A sign that is other than an off-site sign.

Article 4.4 prohibits off-site signs citywide (whether it is a static or digital sign) with four, limited exceptions: A billboard is a type of off-site sign. In accordance with Section 14.4.4 B.11, the City's off-site sign prohibition does not apply to:

- alterations that conform to the provisions of Section 91.6216 of the LAMC's Building Regulations (pertaining to existing sign rights) and all other requirements of the LAMC;
- off-site signs specifically permitted pursuant to a relocation agreement entered into pursuant to California Business and Professions Code Section 5412;
- off-site signs, including off-site digital displays, that are specifically permitted pursuant to a legally adopted specific plan, supplemental use district – through a "SN" Sign District – or an approved development agreement; or
- non-digital off-site signs that are authorized by a valid building permit for a temporary sign on temporary construction walls or on fences of solid wood or similar material surrounding vacant lots pursuant to Section 14.4.17.

Additionally, in accordance with Section 101.5 of the Los Angeles Building Code (LABC), certain signs are exempt from a building permit. These exempt signs must not exceed 20 square feet in area; be placed upon the surface of the ground, no part of which extends more than six feet, six inches above the ground; have no mechanical or moving parts; or have no electricity or other source of illumination or power. Exempt signs must be separated from each other a minimum of 15 feet.

The content shown on an EV charger display will determine whether it is an on-site or an off-site sign. For example, a display on an EV charger that is located in a parking lot of a commercial use and which only displays advertisements for products or services sold by the commercial use would be considered an on-site sign. Such a sign would need to comply with the City's sign regulations and obtain a building permit. On the contrary, if an EV charger display transmits advertisements for products or services not sold on the site, then the display would be considered an "off-site sign." Such displays could only be located within a Sign District pursuant to current sign regulations in the LAMC.

Sign Districts

The City Council enacted the citywide ban on off-site signs in 2002 to address the proliferation of unsightly signs throughout the City and established a new Supplemental Use District "SN" Sign District as an exception to this ban.² Supplemental Use Districts (SUDs), established in Article 3 of Chapter 1 of the LAMC, are additional zoning regulations intended to build upon and enhance the regulations applied through the base zoning. Within Article 3, Section 13.11 contains the procedures, guidelines, and standards for the establishment of a Sign District. The intent of a Sign District is to address the unique characteristics of a specific community which can be enhanced by the imposition of special sign regulations designed to enhance the theme or unique qualities of that district, while addressing the blight of billboards in the City.

Section 13.11 of the LAMC states that a Sign District may be established through the procedures set forth in Section 13B.1.4. (Zone Change) of Chapter 1A of the LAMC. Sign Districts are only allowed in commercial and industrial zones and some multi-family residential (R5) zones. A Sign District must not consist of less than one city block or three acres, whichever is smaller, and the total area of the district must include contiguous parcels of land. A Sign District contains tailored development regulations determined at the time it is established. These regulations may be more or less restrictive than citywide sign regulations found in the LAMC and may address location, sign area, square footage, height, illumination, sign reduction programs, and types of signs permitted, among other considerations.

Typically, an applicant initiates a Sign District via an application submitted to the Department of City Planning; however, the City Council, CPC, and Director of Planning (Director) may also initiate a Sign District. Applicant-led Sign Districts are typically initiated for site-specific projects, whereas City-led Sign Districts are for certain neighborhoods in most cases, such as the Hollywood Signage SUD Sign District and the Historic Broadway Sign District. The boundaries of the Sign District must be prepared at the time of application or initiation. A public hearing may be held by a hearing officer and the Director will draft a recommendation report. The public hearing – whether held by a hearing officer or the CPC – is subject to noticing requirements.

² City of Los Angeles, Ordinance No. 174,552, May 1, 2022.

Once the report is finalized, the CPC will consider the Sign District. If the CPC recommends approval of the Sign District, it can then be considered by the City Council. If the CPC recommends disapproval and the Sign District was initiated by the CPC, Director, or an applicant, the action is final. Only applicant-initiated Sign Districts are appealable to the City Council in the event the CPC recommends disapproval.

A Sign District ordinance also requires an environmental analysis under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). When reviewing a Sign District application, a planner verifies whether a CEQA exemption applies. If not, an Initial Study is conducted to determine whether the project would result in any significant impacts to the environment. Depending on the feedback received from the Initial Study, a Negative Declaration (ND), a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND), or an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) may further be required. It typically takes a Sign District one year or more to reach City Council consideration; this time frame could be extended if an EIR is required. Subsequent City Council consideration and City Attorney form and legality review for Sign Districts usually takes at least another six months.

Signs Located Inside a Building

Under the current Zoning Code, signs located inside buildings – referred to in this report as “interior signs” – are not subject to the citywide sign regulations. The purpose of the sign regulations, stated in Section 14.4.1 of Chapter 1 of the LAMC, is to promote public safety and welfare in the public realm. Signs inside buildings such as shopping malls, sports arenas, or one’s home are not in the public realm.

Section 12.03 of Chapter 1 of the LAMC defines a “building” as:

Any structure having a roof supported by columns or walls, for the housing, shelter or enclosure of persons, animals, chattels or property of any kind.

In addition, Section 14.4.2 of Chapter 1 of the LAMC defines a “window sign” as:

Any sign, except for a supergraphic sign, that is attached to, affixed to, leaning against, or otherwise placed within six feet of a window or door in a manner so that the sign is visible from outside the building.

When issuing building permits, DBS utilizes these definitions to determine whether a proposed sign within a building is an interior sign or a window sign. If the proposed sign is within six feet of a window or door and visible from the outside, then by definition, it is a window sign. Article 4.4 contains a series of regulations pertaining to window signs. If a sign within a building is more than six feet away from a window or door and it is not visible from the outside, it is considered an interior sign. Interior signs do not require a building permit for a sign and are not subject to any sign regulations. An interior sign could contain either on-site or off-site advertisements. Some interior signs may be placed or be large enough to be seen through a window or from the public right-of-way without a permit provided they do not meet the definition of a “window sign.”

Per the Zoning Code's definition, gas station canopies supported by columns may meet the definition of a "building." Therefore, in some cases, digital displays on gas pumps which are located underneath a canopy supported by columns may be considered to be located within a building. Such a display may be considered a "window sign" if it is located within six feet of a wall or column or an "interior sign" if it is located more than six feet away from a wall or column. Other examples of interior signs include static signs and digital displays in restaurants and retail stores. These signs do not fall under the purview of the Zoning Code or DBS. Interior signs are often not visible from the public right-of-way.

Sign Regulations in the New Code (Chapter 1A of the LAMC)

While the current Zoning Code is set forth in Chapter 1 of the LAMC, the City is currently in the process of establishing a New Zoning Code that will comprise a new Chapter 1A of the LAMC and ultimately replace the current Zoning Code. The New Zoning Code will apply to Community Plan Areas as their respective Community Plan Update (CPU) is adopted by the City Council. The Downtown Community Plan Area is expected to be the first CPU that will utilize the New Zoning Code, which is anticipated to be effective at the start of 2025.

The New Zoning Code's sign regulations will be found in Division 4C.11. (Signs) of Article 4 (Development Standards) of Chapter 1A of the LAMC. The New Zoning Code's sign regulations will be very similar to those found in the current Zoning Code, with certain exceptions. One of the biggest distinctions between the zoning codes is that the New Zoning Code's sign regulations will contain an applicability subsection, which will state that the sign regulations do not apply to signs which are fully surrounded by a physical structure:

A sign, having no sign face visible from any public or private right-of-way, that is fully surrounded on all sides by permanent, opaque architectural features on the project lot, including building walls, freestanding walls, roofs, or overhangs, is not subject to the requirements of this Division except for the general brightness limitation set forth in Section 4C.11.1.C.3. (Sign Illumination Limitations).³

The intent of this applicability subsection is to provide clarity regarding what kinds of enclosed signs are not subject to the citywide sign regulations. The New Zoning Code will explicitly state that the sign regulations do not apply to signs that are fully surrounded by a permanent, opaque architectural feature. Additionally, the New Zoning Code defines a "building" as "a covered and enclosed structure intended for human occupation" and contains detailed requirements for both covered area and enclosure. This definition and these requirements would limit what kinds of signs are considered "interior signs" under the purview of the New Zoning Code. This provides more specificity than the current Zoning Code as to what constitutes a building and physical structure.

³ Proposed language of Section 4C.11.1.B.2 in the latest draft of Chapter 1A of the LAMC.

The New Zoning Code's General Sign Rules in Section 4C.11.1. will mirror General Provisions found in Section 14.4.4 of Chapter 1. Additionally, Section 4C.11.3. (Off-Site Signs) in Chapter 1A will translate the off-site sign regulations from Section 14.4.9 of Chapter 1, making minimal and non-substantive changes, primarily in organization. The sign definitions relevant to EV charging facilities – “sign,” “off-site sign,” and “on-site sign” – are identical in both zoning codes.

The New Zoning Code will also carry over the citywide off-site ban from the current Zoning Code. The ban will be prescribed in Section 4C.11.1.C.8. (Prohibited Signs) of Chapter 1A. Similarly, there will be exceptions to the ban in the New Zoning Code, with the primary exception being a Sign District. Section 8.2.3. (Sign Districts (SN)) in Article 8 of Chapter 1A will reflect the same requirements for Sign Districts currently found in Section 13.11 of Chapter 1, including the size requirements and which zones they may be located in.

DISCUSSION

Currently Allowed Signage on EV Chargers

The current Zoning Code's sign regulations require operators wishing to display off-site advertisements on their EV chargers to apply for a Sign District. As discussed in the Background section of this report, there are exemptions for “interior signs” in the current Zoning Code and “fully surrounded signs” in the New Zoning Code that may allow off-site signs on EV charger operators outside of a Sign District. However, not all EV charging facilities or scenarios can feasibly apply for a Sign District or utilize these exemptions for off-site signage. These avenues for off-site signage would depend on a specific EV charging facility's project scope.

The Sign District process contains several requirements that may be impractical for both the City and applicants. Sign Districts cannot be smaller than one city block or three acres; it is unlikely that an EV charging facility would be this large. Additionally, today's provisions would require EV charging operators to apply for a Sign District for each individual site, as a Sign District must be continuous. If an EV charging facility were large enough to be within its own Sign District, it would have to undergo a multi-year case that would prove timely and expensive for applicants. It takes the City at least one to two years to adopt a Sign District and it costs applicants approximately \$150,000, not counting consultant fees. Lastly, the case processing of Sign Districts would require extensive City resources to lead each case through the legislative adoption process.

Both the current and new Zoning Codes' exemptions for “interior signs” and “fully surrounded signs” could only be applied to EV charging facilities in limited scenarios. EV charging facilities located in a Community Plan Area utilizing the current Zoning Code could contain “interior signs” if the EV charger displays are located inside a building, in accordance with the current Zoning Code's definitions and regulations. Such a building would have to meet the definition of “building” of Chapter 1 and the signs must be located more than six feet from an external wall or column. EV charger displays that are located in a Community Plan Area utilizing the New Zoning Code would need to be fully surrounded by a physical structure to not be subject to the New Zoning Code's sign regulations. Additionally, the New Zoning Code's definition of “building” as “a covered

and enclosed structure intended for human occupation” would limit what kinds of signs are considered “interior signs” under the purview of the New Zoning Code. Most EV charging facilities are open-air and EV chargers require a significant amount of area for equipment, which may not lend enough space to build physical walls or a roof. Therefore, not all EV charging facilities can feasibly utilize the “interior sign” or “fully surrounded sign” exemptions.

Intent of the City’s Off-Site Sign Ban

The City’s sign regulations currently do not allow off-site advertising on EV chargers except under limited circumstances; therefore, any exception established exclusively for EV chargers would conflict with the intent of the citywide off-site sign ban. The City Council adopted Ordinance No. 174,552 in 2002 to address the proliferation of signs, with an emphasis on off-site advertisements, throughout the City.⁴ The City Council noted at the time of the ordinance’s adoption that this proliferation had become a problem adversely impacting the City’s neighborhoods. In response to these considerations, Ordinance No. 174,552 established Section 13.11 of the LAMC, which limited off-site signs to Sign Districts. This localized approach for signage, which requires City Council approval, allows signs in certain areas by applying specific standards and regulations informed by the context of that community.

Altering the City’s sign regulations in order to create an exception from the citywide off-site sign ban for EV charging facilities may contradict with the ban’s original intent. The ban was introduced to create a process in which the City could carefully analyze the consequences of any proposed off-site signage, provide the opportunity for community input, and impose standards to mitigate any adverse impacts. Furthermore, Section 14.4.4 B.9 of Chapter 1 of the LAMC contains very specific and intentional exceptions to the ban, none of which target a specific business model.

Creating a blanket exception for EV charging – a use that will increase exponentially over the next few years and decades – would potentially remove the local control obtained by the ban. With the rapid increase of EV adoption, EV chargers will continue occupying a greater percentage of parking spaces in the City over time. EV chargers will be on commercial corridors, in and near residential areas, in shopping center parking lots, and many more locations. A blanket exception could unintentionally commence a new wave of proliferation of off-site signs in the City, with the risk of concentrating off-site advertising in neighborhoods where EV ownership is low, such as in disadvantaged communities, to compensate for the low EV market share of the area.

Reduced sign regulations for EV charging facilities would not provide a clear or apparent public benefit. Private operators cannot guarantee low prices for charging, nor could the City regulate prices or the content being advertised via an ordinance. An ordinance can only regulate land use, not business practices. Furthermore, EV charging operators receive financial aid from the local, State, and federal government – including the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) – which can assist them in opening and maintaining EV charging stations operative. After extensive outreach and discussions with various EV charging operators, they revealed that

⁴ City of Los Angeles, Complete Council File 99-1092, <https://clkrep.lacity.org/online/docs/1999/99-1092.PDF>.

their two biggest concerns are establishing a predictable approval process across all City departments and improving electrical infrastructure. Signage did not come up prior to the transmittal of the Department of City Planning's previous report. Incorporating different sign regulations for EV chargers in the LAMC would add additional complexities to establishing EV charging as a use citywide as off-site digital advertising is a contentious topic given the City's current prohibition outside of Sign Districts.

By creating a wider exception for "interior signs," "fully surrounded signs," or other off-site signs not facing the public right-of-way, the City may again come at risk of contradicting the intent of the City's sign regulations and protracting the EV Charging Ordinance's legislative adoption process. In addition, a wider exception could be unintentionally utilized by other business models, not necessarily EV charging stations, which could lead to an increase of off-site signage throughout the City. As such, the Department of City Planning does not recommend any changes to the City's sign regulations which would permit signs on EV chargers nor expand these definitions.

Exemption from the City's Sign Regulations in Chapters 1 and 1A of the LAMC

The following is a potential approach based on the Department of City Planning's research and consultation with other City departments if the City Council wishes to allow off-site signage on EV chargers not currently allowed by the Zoning Code.

The EV Charging Ordinance, in addition to defining EV uses in the LAMC, could contain language to exempt certain off-site signs in EV charging facilities from the City's sign regulations. This exception could be incorporated in each Zoning Code's respective sign regulations in Section 14.4.4 B.11 of Chapter 1 and Section 4C.11.3. (Off-Site Signs) of Chapter 1A of the LAMC. In order to tightly control and limit off-site signage to a certain sign area or location, the exception for EV charging facilities would need to provide objective provisions that clearly state where off-site signage is allowed and any applicable sign regulations and standards they are subject to ensure there is no ambiguity in implementation.

The ordinance could also outline new standards specifically for off-site signs on EV chargers, which could be incorporated in each Zoning Code's sign regulations. The following are standards and other requirements the ordinance may consider:

- Prohibit digital off-site signs in or near residential areas;
- Limit digital off-site signs to commercial and industrial corridors only;
- Limit digital off-site signs to a certain size;
- Orientation of digital off-site signs away from the public right-of-way;
- Placement of signs a certain distance from the public right-of-way;

- Prohibit speakers and/or videos with audio;
- Screening and/or minimum enclosure standards; and
- Limit digital off-site signs to accessory EV charging facilities only.

Environmental Analysis

CEQA requires the City to conduct an environmental analysis whenever it makes a discretionary or legislative decision, including the adoption of a land use ordinance. Environmental factors under CEQA most likely to be affected by the EV Charging Ordinance include ground-disturbing impacts due to excavation, contamination, historical resources, and transportation/traffic. An EV Charging Ordinance with no sign regulations would most likely require an Initial Study to determine whether it would result in any significant impacts to the environment and how they could be mitigated. An additional environmental study conducted by a third-party consultant regarding vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and safety impacts may be required alongside the Initial Study. As such, the DCP is recommending the City Council to instruct the City Administrative Officer to report back with recommendations for funding sources and the fiscal impact up to \$150,000 for the preparation of this study.

An ordinance containing regulations permitting off-site signage on EV chargers would similarly require an environmental analysis under CEQA, starting with an Initial Study. Depending on the analysis obtained from the Initial Study, an ND, MND, or an EIR may further be required. An ND or an MND could be drafted by DCP staff, but includes requirements regarding public posting and tribal notification and would likely require technical studies by subject matter experts. The Department will require resources to retain technical experts for this analysis as no resources for this part of the work program are identified in the FY 24-25 Budget. Additionally, if an EIR is required, which consists of a lengthier process including a public review and comment period and a hearing, a third-party consultant and additional resources for contractual services in addition to DCP's second recommendation in this report will be required.

In addition to a potentially longer environmental analysis if an EIR is found to be required, an ordinance with EV charging sign regulations must allow for a robust public outreach strategy. As demonstrated by the history and public record leading up to the adoption of the current sign regulations in the LAMC, signs are a controversial topic in the City. In order to draft a comprehensive planning policy, DCP staff must conduct additional research and site visits and gather community input, on top of the research and outreach required for the EV charging regulations themselves. As such, the legislative adoption process for an EV Charging Ordinance that further includes exemptions or updates to existing sign regulations is likely to extend the legislative adoption timeline by an additional one to two years for a total of two to four years for full adoption.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Allowing off-site signage not currently permitted by the Zoning Code specifically for EV charging stations may conflict with the intent of the City's sign regulations to curtail visual blight and provide local control regarding off-site signs, especially with no clear and apparent public benefit. Additionally, any proposed regulations to allow off-site signs on EV chargers have the potential to significantly increase the EV Charging Ordinance's legislative adoption timeline. At a time when EV adoption is growing exponentially, zoning regulations for EV charging uses are necessary to successfully accommodate and sustainably shape this growth in the City. Enacting such zoning regulations to define EV charging as a primary use and codify review and approval procedures for such a use should be the City's primary goal.

As such, the Department of City Planning proposes the following:

1. Instruct the Department of City Planning, in coordination with the Department of Building and Safety and City Attorney, to continue with instructions 1, 2, and 3 of the PLUM Committee report for CF 22-0120-S1 dated June 18, 2024, as adopted by the City Council on July 2, 2024.
2. Instruct the City Administrative Officer, in coordination with the Department of City Planning, to prepare a report with recommendations as to funding sources and the fiscal impact up to \$150,000 for the preparation of the environmental impact analysis required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Sincerely,



VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP
Director of Planning

VPB:AV:hsc:nc:bk:rl