


CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

Date: February 20, 2020

To: Honorable City Council
c/o City Clerk, Room 395
Attention: Honorable Mike Bonin, Chair, Transportation Committee

From: Seleta J. Reynolds,  General Manager
Department of Transportation

Subject: **ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATIONS IN THE PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY**
(CF #14-0079-S4)

SUMMARY

As directed by the City Council (Council) in Council File 14-0079-S4, this report provides a status update on the efforts to create a pilot program to allow private entities to install Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations in the public right-of-way.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. DIRECT LADOT to report back in 60 Days with Rules and Guidelines for the Pilot Program.

BACKGROUND

The Los Angeles region is home to the most electric vehicles of any area in the United States, and is third globally, behind only Shanghai and Beijing according to a November 2019 International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT) report. With over 200,000 electric vehicles registered through the end of 2018, and more drivers deciding to opt for a plug-in vehicle of some variety when purchasing a new car, the need for ample public EV charging is clear. This situation is intensified as residents of non-single family homes begin to choose EVs and urban goods delivery vehicles begin converting to electric.

In February 2019, City Council directed the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT), the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), and the Bureaus of Engineering and Street Services (BOE and BSS) to create a pilot program to allow private entities to install Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations in the public right-of-way. LADOT worked with other City Departments, the Mayor's Office of Sustainability, and the Citywide Electric Vehicle Task Force to design a pilot, identify data, staffing and budgetary needs, potential program constraints, and best practices to manage the permitting and deployment process.

This report provides the 60-day update on the status of the pilot program development.

DISCUSSION

LADOT examined existing regulations and permitting processes, engaged with private sector providers of EV chargers, and developed a framework for a curbside EV charging permit. Many of the proposals

presented in this report are informed by existing programs including Seattle's Electric Vehicle Charging in the Public Right-of-Way (EVCROW) Pilot Program and the City of Los Angeles (City) BlueLA low income EV carshare program.

Regulatory Framework for On-Street EV Charging

Companies that operate networks of EV chargers are currently limited to installations on private property. For those who do not have access to a home charger, this may limit access to charging based on hours of operation, gates, or inconsistent policies set by owners of private properties and commercial developments. The City of Los Angeles provides EV charging in a number of facilities around Los Angeles, including at the Los Angeles Civic Center, the LA Mall, numerous libraries, LAX and the Los Angeles Zoo. LADOT and the General Services Department plan to install additional chargers at several facilities around the City.

City Departments install and operate all curbside chargers currently available. The Public Works Bureau of Street Lighting operates approximately 300 EV chargers installed on street lights citywide. LADWP installed approximately 40 chargers on power poles located curbside. LADOT installed over 100 EV chargers in 15 City-owned public parking lots.

Industry Outreach

To develop a regulatory framework for the pilot program, LADOT communicated with five major operators in the Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment (EVSE) sector to gauge interest in the program and identify potential barriers to participation. Key findings by staff included low to moderate interest in participating, primarily due to limitations on the term of the permit and potential costs.

Providers anticipate high costs for power, construction, and maintenance of permanent infrastructure. Many highlighted existing standard practices of installing charging infrastructure for anywhere from 5-15 years, due to the initial costs for construction and the rate of return based on EV ownership rates.

Companies also expressed a preference for the City to provide guidelines or options for locations where they could install chargers, rather than choosing from pre-selected locations. One major challenge they expect in locating charger sites is identifying which eligible locations also have access to adequate power resources to enable EV charging. Many companies remain open to installations in both residential and commercial areas, and some stressed the importance of enforcing parking regulations such as time limits to ensure availability of chargers. Companies did express a desire to stay engaged in the conversation with the City, to inform development of the pilot and provide feedback on barriers to participation.

Pilot Program Locations

Single family homes comprise 45% of Los Angeles housing. The path to installing an electric vehicle charger in a garage or driveway is much clearer for single family homeowners, and programs and rebates offered by LADWP and others incentivize installations. Multi-family residences and commercial buildings make up the vast majority of the rest of the housing stock in Los Angeles, but present a challenge with respect to the provision of charging infrastructure.

Residents and tenants looking to install chargers at multi-family buildings and in other commercial retail and office locations face complications such as obtaining approval from HOA's and buildings managers,

locating sufficient power and panel space, lack of awareness, and availability of rebate programs. Staff recommends focusing the pilot in and around multi-family and commercial developments to help bridge this gap in availability of EV chargers. Industry stakeholders support this approach, indicating these neighborhoods make the most sense in terms of where vehicles go and where charging infrastructure is needed.

LADOT recommends eligible zones for permitted EV charger installations be designated in each of the 15 City Council Districts. Currently, publicly available chargers are clustered around the City in areas where electric vehicle adoption is higher. This approach for pilot installations will also help the City evaluate if installing chargers in neighborhoods with lower or no EV ownership will catalyze the adoption of EVs in these areas.

Related Program Costs

Understanding cost as a major factor for companies determining whether to participate in the program, LADOT reviewed existing program and permit costs for the BlueLA EV carshare program (Table 1) and LADOT’s fixed-space carshare permit (Table 2) to assess costs and staff resources needed to implement similar projects. BlueLA carshare stations similarly involve installing curbside EV chargers, including accessing power and siting stations based on customer needs. The fixed-space carshare permit allows private companies to reserve designated on-street parking spaces for their customers to pick up and park carshare vehicles.

Permit fees for these programs vary depending on the exact site and may change following station siting and field work, so applicants need to plan for a potential range of fees. Fees may increase depending on the presence of parking meters and how much revenue they produce, proximity to power resources, and as-needed additional engineering work.

Table 1. Permit fees for the BlueLA EV carshare program

Fee*	Department	Cost Range
BSL Permit	Bureau of Street Lighting	\$350
A-Permit	Bureau of Engineering	\$1,600-\$3,200
U-Permit	Bureau of Engineering	\$305-\$750
Street Damage Restoration Fee	Bureau of Street Services	\$15,000-\$25,000
Electrical Permit, including Feasibility Analysis	Department of Water and Power	\$1,500*

*Additional fees depend on the work required to bring power to the site following feasibility analysis.

Table 2. Permit fees for the Fixed-Space carshare program

Fee	Assessment Method	Cost Range
Annual Permit Fee	Per Vehicle	\$250/year

One-Time Implementation Fee	Per Parking Space	\$200
Monthly Tier Fee (unmetered space)	Per Parking Space	\$75/month
Monthly Tier Fee (metered space)*	Per Parking Space	\$75-\$275/month
Meter Recovery Fees (metered space)*	Per Parking Space	\$900-3,300/year

*Metered space fees vary depending on annual meter revenue, as detailed in LAMC Section 80.58.1

In addition to the fees listed in Table 1 and Table 2, two to three hours of staff time a week are needed for LADOT's Traffic Control Plan review.

Pilot Program Permitting Framework

LADOT recommends a pilot program that minimizes barriers to provider participation while ensuring the program aligns with goals set forth by LADOT, Council, and the Mayor's Office. Meeting these goals and analyzing the outcomes is necessary to evaluate the pilot.

Priority goals include an increase in EV use (particularly in areas with low EV ownership), and a streamlined permit process for companies who want to install EV chargers on the curbside in the public right-of-way. The program will further goals from the Mayor's Sustainability pLAN, including an increase in the percentage of zero emission vehicles in the City, and 10,000 publicly available EV chargers by 2022. LADOT will assess installation pricing models and evaluate EV charger utilization rates to improve or modify the program.

Permitting Process and Timeline

LADOT will establish a new permit for private operators to install charging facilities in the public right-of-way. This mirrors the BOE Revocable Permit ("R-Permit"), which grants conditional encroachment of the public right-of-way by private parties.

LADOT will act as a case manager for permit applicants, streamlining the process and coordinating applications for permits from BOE, BSS, and LADWP. LADOT will provide applicants all necessary documents, forms, contacts, and other relevant information. LADOT staff will work with applicants to refine and adjust installation locations, communicate with other Departments to assess utility access, and then provide final review and issue a permit to begin construction. Turnaround time is estimated to take three months from application acceptance to Notice to Proceed.

Permit Term

Based on the feedback from EVSE operators, LADOT estimates the ideal permit term for this pilot is 7-10 years. Companies made clear that a long term permit is necessary to get a reasonable rate of return. This is mainly due to the installation lead time and upfront costs.

BlueLA contracts are 5-year terms and Seattle's EVCROW program implemented 1-year terms. BlueLA stations are operational with 5 chargers in 31 locations. Seattle's program only produced one station. While not the only factor in enabling participation in the pilot, a 7-10 year term would make this pilot

more appealing to EV charger providers. LADOT recommends the permit begin with a 7-year term, where additional years are granted contingent on compliance with rules and regulations.

Eligible Locations

Permit applicants will be able to choose from several eligible zones for pilot program EV charger installations. LADOT will host a map on its website detailing street segments that are eligible, including areas without metered parking, streets adjacent to commercial or multi-family buildings, and locations with gaps in publicly available EV charging infrastructure.

Additional criteria needed to approve locations will be assessed based on submitted applications. This may include locating power and utility access, proximity to red curb, loading zones, planned bike lanes, or other conditions, as well as criteria outlined in the resolution adopted by City Council in February 2020 regarding designating parking stalls for electric vehicle charging (Council File #20-0067). Many of these criteria may only be determined following a field visit during application review, or may not yet be available in a digital format citywide. LADOT will work with applicants to determine the feasibility of proposed EV charger locations, including identifying alternate sites nearby and analyzing fees required for preferred sites.

Next Steps

LADOT will continue to coordinate with other Departments and the Electric Vehicle Task Force to further develop the pilot program, including proposing a fee schedule, location eligibility guidelines and technical specifications, and creating an application form.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact as this report is informational.

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