



April 8, 2021

TO: Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee

FROM: Emma Siegworth, City Planner

SUBJECT: Initiate and recommend Zoning Text Amendments for EV Electric Vehicle Charging Station Sponsorship Signs

Background

Minor zoning text amendments are proposed to update the Zoning Code to accommodate sponsorship signage for the EV Spot Network, the new network of electric vehicle charging stations and electric vehicle carshare service anticipated for launch in summer 2021, similar to sponsorship signage provided for bicycle sharing facilities and for transit stop shelters and benches.

The EV Spot Network, formerly known as the Twin Cities Electric Vehicle Mobility Network, is a project being developed by the Cities of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, HOURCAR, and Xcel Energy. The network includes 70 electric vehicle charging stations called “EV Spots” that are powered by renewable energy, located along/within public roadways in Saint Paul and Minneapolis, and operated by the Cities. At least 50% of the EV Spots will be located within ACP50 census tracts, where at least half of the residents are people of color and at least 40% of the residents live below 185% of the federal poverty line. Each EV Spot will have least one or two chargers available for members of the public to charge their own electric vehicles and one charger dedicated to Evie Carshare vehicles – four to six parking spaces per EV Spot. The new Evie Carshare service includes a fleet of approximately 150 electric carshare vehicles and allows users to pick up a car, drive where they need to go, and park the car anywhere within the 35-mile service area. Evie Carshare will be operated by HOURCAR, a local car-sharing nonprofit.

The EV Spot Network supports Metropolitan Council Thrive MSP 2040 Plan regional goals to improve transportation options and reduce climate impacts. The network also helps to address the city’s Climate Action and Resilience Plan goals to reduce single-occupancy vehicle miles traveled by 40% by 2040, reduce citywide greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030, and reach carbon neutrality by 2050. The EV Spot Network was presented at Saint Paul’s Transportation Committee in July 2019. Since then, progress on the project has reflected the following timeline:

- Community engagement activities – prototyping focus groups, online survey, and online citywide community meetings (Fall 2019 – Fall 2020)

- Notifications of property owners and tenants near proposed EV Spot locations (Fall 2020-Spring 2021)
- HOURCAR operations preparation and site planning (Fall – Winter 2020)
- Permitting and construction begins (Late Winter/early Spring 2021)
- Network launch (Late Summer 2021)

Sponsorship Signs

Sponsorship of the EV Spots provides funding for maintenance and operation of the charging station network, while keeping the cost to charge an electric vehicle reasonable for customers. As shown in the images to the right, the proposed sponsorship signage at the EV Spots is expected to look similar to the existing sponsorship signage at Nice Ride bicycle sharing facilities, but on a smaller scale.



Rendering of an EV Spot

The anticipated sponsorship signs at the EV Spots would meet the definition of “advertising sign” in the Saint Paul Zoning Code, which is prohibited in all zoning districts. The proposed zoning code amendments below would allow EV Spot sponsorship signage in the same manner as Nice Ride bicycle sharing facilities in all zoning districts, which has been permitted since 2014.



Sponsorship signage at Nice Ride facility

Staff recommends the following amendments to Zoning Code § 64.422:

NOTE: New language to be added is shown by underlining.

Sec. 64.422. Bicycle sharing facility and electric vehicle charging station sponsorship signs.

Bicycle sharing facility and electric vehicle charging station sponsorship signs are permitted in all zoning districts subject to the following required standards:

- One (1) sponsorship sign, no more than fifteen (15) square feet in area, is permitted per bicycle sharing facility or electric vehicle charging station. The sponsorship sign shall be an integral part of the bicycle sharing facility rack or charging station.
- The sponsorship sign shall primarily provide identifying information for a sponsor such as name, address, telephone number, or logo; any product advertising shall be incidental and secondary to sponsor identification.
- Signs shall not be externally illuminated.
- Signs shall be maintained in good condition.
- Signs within the public right of way are subject to, and must first have and maintain, a permit from the designated road authority.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission initiate a study to permit electric vehicle charging station sponsorship signs, adopt a resolution recommending approval of the proposed text amendments to Zoning Code § 64.422 without holding a public hearing at Planning Commission, instead only holding one

public hearing at City Council as permitted per Minnesota Statute 462.357 Subd. 3. Public Hearings in order to meet the project timeline for permitting, construction, and network launch in Spring and Summer 2021. Staff also recommends forwarding the study recommending zoning code amendments to City Council.

Attachments

Draft Resolution

city of saint paul
planning commission resolution
file number _____
date _____

AMENDMENTS TO ZONING CODE SECTION 64.422

WHEREAS, Section 61.801(a) of the Zoning Code calls for periodic review of the Zoning Code to reflect current City policies and bring the Zoning Code up-to-date; and

WHEREAS, amendments regarding sponsorship signs for electric vehicle charging stations are needed; and

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee discussed the proposed text amendments to Zoning Code § 64.422 pertaining to sponsorship signs for electric vehicle charging stations on April 14, 2021, and recommended approval of the proposed text amendments; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission considered the recommendations of the Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee; and

WHEREAS, the City Council will hold a public hearing on the proposed text amendments to Zoning Code § 64.422;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, under the provisions of Zoning Code § 61.801(a) and pursuant to the provisions of Minnesota Statutes § 462.357, that the Planning Commission recommends to the Mayor and City Council the following amendments to Zoning Code § 64.422 (new language to be added is shown by underlining):

Sec. 64.422. - Bicycle sharing facility and electric vehicle charging station sponsorship signs.

Bicycle sharing facility and electric vehicle charging station sponsorship signs are permitted in all zoning districts subject to the following required standards:

- (a) One (1) sponsorship sign, no more than fifteen (15) square feet in area, is permitted per bicycle sharing facility or electric vehicle charging station. The sponsorship sign shall be an integral part of the bicycle sharing facility rack or charging station.
- (b) The sponsorship sign shall primarily provide identifying information for a sponsor such as name, address, telephone number, or logo; any product advertising shall be incidental and secondary to sponsor identification.
- (c) Signs shall not be externally illuminated.
- (d) Signs shall be maintained in good condition.
- (e) Signs within the public right of way are subject to, and must first have and maintain, a permit from the designated road authority.

moved by _____
seconded by _____
in favor _____
against _____