



Office of the Mayor

CONSENT CALENDAR

November 14, 2006

To: Members of the City Council

From: Mayor Tom Bates  
Council Member Dona Spring

Subject: Small-Scale Electric Vehicle Dealerships

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the City Council direct the Planning Commission to amend the CSA zoning on South Shattuck Avenue to permit small-scale electric vehicle dealerships.

**BACKGROUND:**

The City has received inquiries from companies interested in retailing the next generation of electric vehicles in Berkeley, particularly for small dealership locations on Shattuck Avenue. Current city zoning law prohibits any new car dealerships in the area, although there are a number of existing dealerships (Toyota, Honda, Volvo, Nissan) that pre-date those land use restrictions.

Berkeley would be a natural hub for electric vehicle sales. In addition to our long track record of environmental leadership and our growing green economy, other sellers of efficient cars have succeeded here. For example, for several years Toyota of Berkeley sold more Prius hybrid cars than any other dealership in North America. In addition to those benefits, new vehicle sales are a major tax generator for the City and do not have the negative emission and car repair impacts of traditional dealerships.

This item would direct the Planning Commission to examine making an amendment to our current South Shattuck Avenue (CSA) zoning rules that would allow smaller scale new electric vehicle dealerships, with appropriate restrictions.

**FISCAL IMPACTS:** Staff and Commission time to make the change. Possible significant increases in revenue if dealerships locate in Berkeley.

**CONTACT PERSON:** Mayor Tom Bates, 981-7100.

**ATTACHMENTS:** Email from Christopher Zuber.

**Despain, Deanna**

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**From:** ct zuber [logiccomm@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, October 30, 2006 6:29 PM  
**To:** Berkeley Mayor's Office  
**Cc:** DeVries, Cisco  
**Subject:** electric auto zoning

Dear Mayor Bates;

I have been pursuing locating an electric car dealership in Berkeley, but find that this type of business is prohibited on South Shattuck, the existing auto row where most car dealerships are located. The zoning for the South Area Commercial District (C-SA) prohibits "Automobile Sales and Rental" (cf. Table 23E.52.030). The Definition section of the Zoning Ordinance defines "Automobile Sales and Rental" as "an establishment which sells, rents or leases automobiles, trucks or other motor driven vehicles (excepting motorcycles) which are on its premises".

Zoning staff inform me that electric vehicles fall under this prohibition because they are "motor driven."

As I am sure you can appreciate, an electric car dealership has few of the negative impacts that come with sales and service of gasoline-powered vehicles. We would require only a small showroom of a few thousand square feet, since we have only a few models to display. We would not need extensive areas for indoor and outdoor display of new and used vehicles, nor would we require on-site service facilities (though, if it were allowed, it would be helpful). I do not believe that there are any negative impacts on the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Please consider modifying the zoning ordinance to exempt sale of electric vehicles from the existing prohibition on Automobile Sales and Rental.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Christopher Zuber

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