



Planning and Economic Development

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From: Chris McLeod, AICP, Planning Manager
To: Members of the Planning Commission
Date: 10/15/2025
Re: Zoning Ordinance Permitted Use Discussion

Over the course of the last month, the Planning Department has seen an increase in the number of zoning inquiries regarding uses that don't necessarily fit easily into the current zoning list of permissible uses. We wanted to bring two of those uses before the Commission as solely discussion items, to gain input as to how the Planning Commission would view these potential uses, the best way to categorize them, and if there is a necessity (or desire) to amend the zoning ordinance.

The first use is EV charging stations as a primary use. This potential use goes beyond an existing store or business provided ancillary EV charging stations at their location for either the general public or for their employees. The principal use of the site would be for an owner of an EV vehicle to come to the site to charge their vehicle. While at the location, amenities would be provided either in a building or onsite. These amenities may include food and drink services either conventionally or via vending machines and meeting spaces, where a driver could make phone calls or conduct work on their laptop. Depending on the company, additional amenities or ancillary uses may also be provided. However, these uses would not be the primary use, they would be ancillary to the primary use of charging your vehicle.

To date, planning staff has defined this type of use similar to a gas station. However, many of the attributes of a gas station are not applicable to an EV station. For instance, traffic patterns are much different. For typical gas stations, a patron may be able to enter and exit the site quickly after filling up, however for EV stations "filling" times are much longer. Most gas stations rely heavily on the convenience store portion of the use, however, the EV stations that we have researched don't seem to be as reliant on a full convenience store, albeit some minor sales are offered. Gas storage and the potential environmental impacts of a gas station are less, or at least not the same with an EV station. An EV station simply has their chargers with no gasoline storage. However, with an EV station, the need for larger transformers and the ability of the power grid to accommodate such a use becomes more prominent. These are some of the characteristics to consider as we discuss how this use should be handled, knowing that this type of use will likely become more prominent in the coming years.

The second use we would like to discuss with the Commission is the use of a cat café. We have had several inquiries over the last several months as to whether the city allows for a cat café and if so, where would it be permitted. Being mindful that most cat cafes are structured so that cats that reside at the café are there for the purposes of hopefully being adopted, the staff has typically said that cat cafes have characteristics of a kennel or boarding facility for animals. This eliminates the use from many of our zoning districts. The Highway Business District, the Employment Center District, the Industrial District, and the residential districts (with large lots sizes) allows for kennels as a conditional use. A kennel use is not permissible in any other district.

With that being said, a cat café is a use that has been allowed in other similar communities within a more typical commercial or business zoning district, likely much like a pet store would be permissible. The question arises as to whether the Planning Commission feels a cat café is most similar to a combined use of a coffee shop and pet store, thereby allowing it a district that would otherwise allow for those two types of uses. With the keeping of any animals the question arises as to the potential for noise and the ability to provide a place for those animals to go to the bathroom, keeping in mind any answer given for a cat would also be applicable to other similar household pets.

This information is being provided to the Planning Commission for discussion purposes at this time. Depending on the outcome of our discussions, next steps will be determined.