



## Silicon Valley Transportation Electrification Clearinghouse Meeting

December 9, 2021

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM PDT

[via Zoom: view recording](#)

## Notes

### Welcome & September Meeting Recap

Don Bray, Director of Account Services and Community Relations at SVCE, opened the meeting and reminded participants of the purpose of SVTEC:

*A collaboration of public, private, and nonprofit leaders working to advance transportation electrification in Silicon Valley by overcoming policy, regulatory, financial, and knowledge-based barriers.*

He provided an overview of the agenda and introduced Zoe Elizabeth, Manager of Energy Services, to provide a recap of the September meeting, including a presentation from the US Department of Energy's Loan Programs Office (available on the SVTEC webpage). This was followed by a deep-dive discussion into EV reach code options for the next code adoption cycle with SVCE's partner agency, Peninsula Clean Energy, which will take the lead in developing the proposal for local agencies.

### EVI Permitting: State of the Market in SVCE's Service Territory

Zoe then recapped the 4 areas where SVTEC is focused:

1. Overcoming barriers for multifamily
2. Piloting grid integration
3. Providing targeted funding, and
4. Advancing local policy – *today's focal point.*

SVCE undertook a study to understand what permitting looked like in member agencies for several electrification-related processes, including charging infrastructure. In practice, there was wide divergence in processes and costs, and competing priorities that made simplification difficult. Today's conversation will help identify ways that SVCE can help, going forward, to ease some of the constraints and help member agencies with implementation of AB 970 in particular. She then turned over to Girish Balachandran, CEO of SVCE, to introduce the next portion of the agenda.

### Accelerating EVI Permitting with AB 970 – Opportunities and Requirements

Girish reinforced the message the SVCE stands ready to help and provide resources to minimize friction in the system, thanked the Assemblymember for his work on this legislation, and introduced him.

[Assemblymember Kevin McCarty](#) talked about our state's longtime leadership on clean air issues and how that fits with climate change and the importance of moving away from internal combustion engine vehicles. He reflected on his family's experiences with EVs and recapped the

biggest challenges for consumer adoption: the price and range of the vehicles themselves and the need for more publicly available charging infrastructure.

AB 970 builds on AB 1236 (2015, Chiu), which began the permit streamlining process, and puts new timelines on permit processing such that an application that is not acted on within that time will be deemed approved. The goal is to require the localities to start the process, focused on health and safety, and not have those applications languish.

McCarty will also have a bill next year focused on increasing the availability of EVs in the state. Questions for the Assemblymember included: availability of federal funding\* (see chat) and what barriers local agencies face to adoption, with staff capacity and expertise often cited; funding should not be an issue, as fees are collected for processing. A further question about what happens when the addition of charging moves a property below its parking minimums was discussed and then clarified by Tyson Eckerle, Deputy Director, Zero Emission Vehicles, Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) to be addressed by AB 970\* (see chat). Another question was whether EV charging stations are required to provide compressed air, similar to gas stations; this issue has not been addressed.

### **Next Steps in AB 970 Implementation**

Tyson noted that more and more cities are streamlining and they are eager to help more to do so. He reminded the group of the GO-Biz [EV Charging Station Permitting Guidebook](#), soon to be updated, and that we need to massively increase the rate of adoption of public charging to meet the 2035 executive order.

Next, Aram Shamsian, CivicSpark Fellow at GO-Biz, led the group briefly through AB 1236 compliance:

- 151 streamlined
- 137 in progress, and
- 253 not streamlined

and the requirements cities must meet:

1. Ordinance
2. Checklist
3. Administrative approval
4. Approval limited to health and safety review
5. Electric signatures accepted
6. EVCS not subject to association approval
7. One Complete Deficiency Notice if Application is Incomplete

Moving on to 970, Aram emphasized that it is codifying timelines for the steps in 1236 with differing lengths, depending on the number of stations being proposed; clarifies parking requirements; and when the requirements begin. He encouraged participants to visit their [Plug-in Electric Vehicle Charging Station Readiness](#) page and map to learn more and see examples of best practices. He urged all local governments to please take advantage of their resources and assistance to achieve streamlining and compliance on 970.

### **The View from the Other Side of the Counter**

Zoe introduced Sara Rafalson, Vice President, Market Development & Public Policy, and Mandeep Guragain, Director, Development Engineering, EVGo. Sara led off with a quick introduction of the company, which is the largest purveyor of public charging in the country. She noted that it takes about 18 months to bring a DC fast charger online – of which, only about

a month is construction; maybe it could get to 6 months. Can it get faster? Northern CA has some of the longest permitting times for them nationwide, up to 120 days. Some common challenges include:

- Online submittal process not straightforward
- AHJs are resource-constrained
- Requirements for submittals are not consistent or clearly communicated
- No specific point of contact for questions
- Process is lengthy and complex
- Two departments require two separate applications
- Intake appointment can take up to a month
- EVCS are being reviewed for aesthetics and not in compliance to the intent of AB 1236

In the interest of a constructive dialogue, EVgo has identified some best practices they have seen and hope will be adopted by more agencies, which Mandeep laid out:

1. **Adopt (streamlined) an Online Permitting Process**
2. **Offer Expedited Processing that Shortens Permitting Timelines**
3. Remove Requirement for Pre-Appointment or Pre-Approvals
4. **Standardize EVCS Permitting Reviews**
5. **Require Only an Electrical Permit**
6. Policy Support for Equipment Placement (Review for health and safety only per intent of Assembly Bills)
7. Dedicated and experienced AHJ resource supporting EVCS permitting

He further detailed the practices in bold. Sara wrapped up by encouraging folks to review their Best Practices handout\* (see chat) and make use of GO-Biz's resources.

Tessa Sanchez, Business Development & Public Policy at Tesla, spoke next. She previously worked for the City of San Francisco and helped them to implement AB 1236. She recapped Tesla's mission: accelerate the world's transition to sustainable energy; and noted how quickly they are producing new vehicles today, especially for consumers who do not have access to charging at home. Their charging infrastructure rollout is accelerating, and they agree with EVgo on many of the recommended best practices that would improve permitting. Major challenges include:

- Long Timelines
- Planning/Zoning Conflicts
- Application of Parking Count Minimums

They are interested in collaborating and helping with key priorities in implementing AB 970 such as:

- Staff Education
- Revise Processes across all Departments
- Proper Tracking System
- Clarify parking requirements

### **Working Together for Successful Implementation in Our Region**

Zoe then led off the discussion with something new she noted from the discussion: the need for tracking mechanism(s). She recapped a few ideas for how SVCE could help member agencies, such as training, implementation grants, and/or third-party support to relieve constraints, and asked for input from the group.

Capacity constraints are also an issue with external planners/building staff – just too much volume. Maybe SVCE could hire an expert reviewer to get uber-familiar with this type of application and expedite accordingly.

Tracking software & procedures are burdensome and that would potentially be a place where SVCE could help, too.

Training might be a multi-layered effort – on the technology and the legislative requirements, for example.

Pre-approved technology is another route to consider, similar to modular homes. The internal technology already goes through this process.

Zoe posed a question about why aesthetic and parking requirements are continuing to come up. Examples included handicapped parking space requirements and lighting issues; Tyson suggested that this is the sort of thing that could/should be on the checklist, and Mandeep mentioned that this could be brought up in the pre-application meeting.

Tessa suggested that local agencies take advantage of funding for permit streamlining for solar and battery storage, and maybe use [SolarAPP+](#) for some of those functions – maybe that would reduce the burden.

## Chat

Eena Sta Maria, County of Santa Clara: What do you foresee as the biggest barrier/roadblock for cities to comply with the bill? Would funding be a factor?

\*Sara Rafalson, EVgo: Mel - with regards to your question on federal funding, in addition to the ~\$380MM that will come to CA, cities and a number of other public entities can apply for \$2.5BN that will be available nationally through a discretionary grant. Happy to answer more questions on federal on the later panel.

\*Tyson Eckerle - GOBiz: from AB 970: (d) If an electric vehicle charging station and any associated equipment interfere with, reduce, eliminate, or in any way impact the required parking spaces for existing uses, the city, county, or city and county shall reduce the number of required parking spaces for the existing uses by the amount necessary to accommodate the electric vehicle charging station and any associated equipment.

[https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=202120220AB970](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220AB970)

Nupur Hiremath, Sunnyvale, CA: Thank you, Aram! Super helpful presentation and great tool!

Lauren Anderson: Thanks for a great presentation. I just want to thank the Go Biz team for being super helpful earlier this year, as I was trying to navigate what Mountain View needed to work on to get streamlined (we're still working on it - currently at "yellow" status)

Nupur: @Sara - I may have missed this in your comments on slide 26, but what did the different colors for jurisdictions shown on the map represent? Thanks!

Sara: That was a map of cities in SVCE's jurisdiction.

Nupur: @Sara - Oh ok. :) I thought the colors meant something related to EVgo installations (e.g., number in each jurisdiction). Thanks for clarifying!

Sara: No problem! You can find that map here: <https://www.evgo.com/find-a-charger/>

\*Sara: Here are the permitting best practices Kara mentioned: <https://site-assets.evgo.com/f/78437/x/9fbe25aed5/connect-the-watts-local-permitting-best-practices.pdf>

Lauren: There's a lot of construction noise in my neighborhood right now, so I'm writing my comments in chat. For Mountain View, the biggest barrier to streamlining has been the building department's limited capacity and lack of expertise on the legislation. I think training and the

extra capacity could be helpful, although I'd need to check with our building dept regarding how they feel about contract/third party support.

Sara: Thanks for your candor, Bob :)

Lauren: Thank you for a great event!

Mandeep Guragain: Thank you all

Madeline Willett (she/her) Sunnyvale, CA: Thank you!

Eena: Thank you! This was really informative!