

 Electric Era

Monetize the Mandate

Turning EV charging requirements into a
retail advantage

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Monetize the Mandate: Turning EV charging requirements into a retail advantage

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As EV charging shifts from “nice-to-have” to a building-code requirement, retailers face a new reality: charging must be designed, budgeted, and delivered on the same critical path as the store itself and missteps can add cost, complexity, and schedule risk. Many teams default to Level 2 charging as the simplest compliance route, but in practice an L2-heavy approach often becomes a long-term operational tax: low driver value in short retail dwell windows, uneven utilization, frequent user friction, and a sprawling site-wide electrical build that multiplies construction scope across the parking field.

This paper argues that mandates can be met more effectively and profitably, by leveraging code pathways that emphasize power allocation over stall-count proliferation, enabling a Level 3 (DC fast charging) strategy. DC fast charging aligns with real retail behavior (10–20 minute stops), concentrates infrastructure into a manageable charging zone, reduces distributed construction and maintenance burden, and creates a credible platform for monetization through charging revenue, repeat visits, meaningful dwell time, and loyalty/brand integration.

“Monetize the Mandate” reframes compliance from a forced cost into a repeatable profit-center model for new builds, and outlines how a turnkey DC fast charging partner can help retailers execute reliably from design through ongoing operations.



Monetize the Mandate

Retailers building new stores are entering a new reality: EV charging is becoming a code requirement. It shows up in plan review and permitting, which means it isn't something you can get to later or treat as discretionary. It has to be designed, budgeted, and delivered on the same critical path as the rest of the project, and it can directly affect whether a store opens on schedule.

California is the clearest preview of where this goes because it has been among the fastest to translate EV adoption into regulation through the CALGreen building code. But this isn't only a California issue, other states are following a similar playbook. California is just what happens when the future arrives early.

When a mandate lands on your desk, most design teams default to Level 2 (slow charging). It feels like the straightforward way to satisfy a code requirement and move the project forward. The problem is that "straightforward on paper" often becomes complicated in the real world. In a retail environment, an L2-heavy approach can turn a one-time compliance decision into a long-term operational tax.

EV Charging Level	Voltage and Type of Current	Location	Charging Rate	Charging Duration
Level 1 (AC)	120V - AC	Residential	4 Miles/Hour	30+ Hours
Level 2 (AC)	240V - AC	Residential/ Commercial	12-30 Miles/Hour	8-12 Hours
Level 3	480+V - DC (DC Fast Charging)	Commercial	3-15 Miles/Minute	30 Minutes to 80%

(Source: EVChargingSummit.com)

It starts with how retail actually works. Most customers aren't parked for hours. They're in and out buying groceries, picking up prescriptions, grabbing coffee, doing a weekly shop. In that window, L2 rarely delivers a "worth it" moment for drivers. It might add a little range, but not enough to change behavior. When did you last go out of your way to add three dollars of gas to your car?

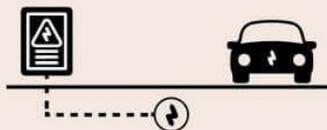
When the benefit is that small, drivers don't seek it out. They won't pay much for it, and they won't reliably come back for it. Utilization stays uneven, chargers sit idle, and when someone does try to use it, the experience is often frustrating: the stall is blocked, the unit is down, the session fails. The result is a classic lose-lose. The retailer spends capital to comply and operating dollars to keep it running, while customers get a charging experience that feels inconsequential and not worth the effort.

1. EV-Capable

Install electrical panel capacity with a dedicated branch circuit and a continuous raceway from the panel to the future EV parking spot.

[Aspen, CO: 3% of parking is EV-Capable \(IBC\)](#)

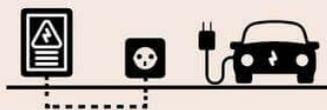
[Atlanta, GA: 20% is EV-Capable \(Ordinance\)](#)



2. EVSE-Ready Outlet

Install electrical panel capacity and raceway with conduit to terminate in a junction box or 240-volt charging outlet (typical clothing dryer outlet).

[Boulder, CO: 10% of parking is EV-Ready Outlet](#)



3. EVSE-Installed

Install a minimum number of Level 2 EV charging stations.

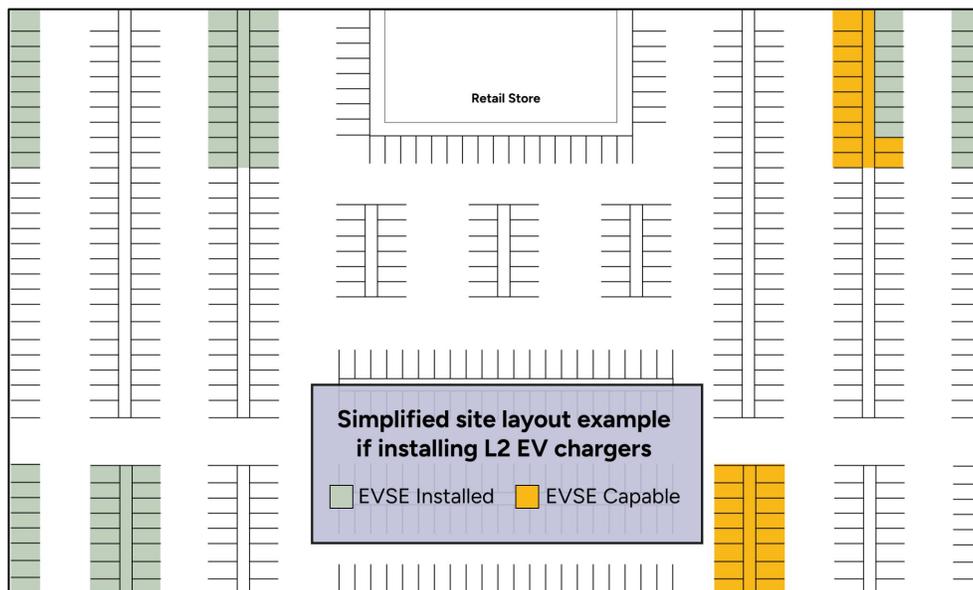
[Palo Alto, CA: 5-10% of parking is EV-Installed](#)



(Source: ChargedFuture.com)

Mandates don't just ask for "a couple chargers." They often translate into a large number of EV-capable spaces, and the default response is to scatter L2 posts across the parking field. What looks simple on paper quickly becomes a site-wide electrical project: trenching across multiple rows, long conduit runs, added panels, inspections, and plenty of ways to slip the schedule.

Take a large format new build in California with roughly 500 parking stalls. If you try to meet the CALGreen mandate with L2, the 2026 retail requirements can push you to roughly 100 EV-capable spaces and 74 installed chargers. That's a lot of hardware spread across the lot, and a lot to build, manage, and maintain, which is why retailers start to resent the mandate.



But here's what most teams miss: the code often gives you another path.



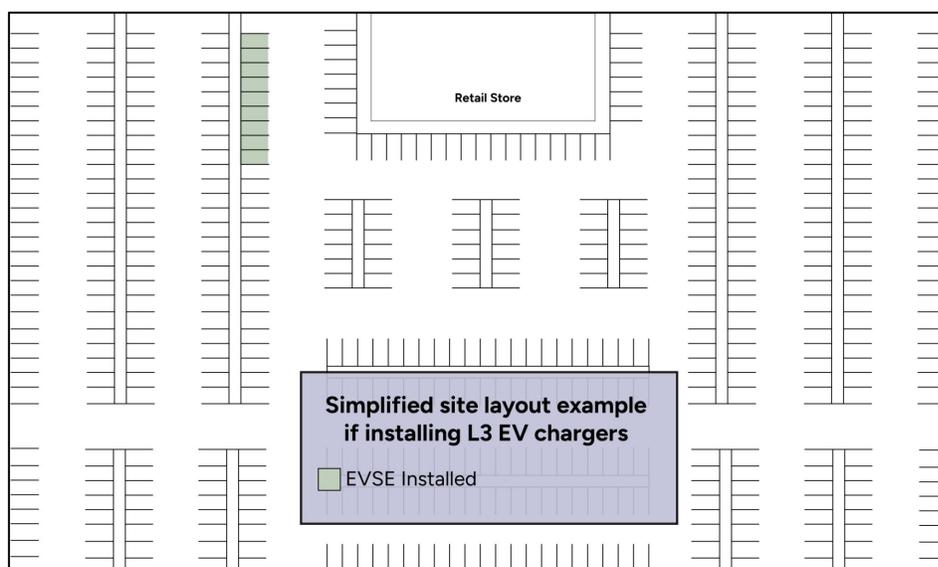
Alongside the prohibitive L2 stall-count approach is the Level 3 (L3) friendly power allocation approach, which lets retailers meet the requirement by delivering the right amount of charging capacity without prescribing a sea of distributed L2 pedestals.

That penny drop moment comes with a second realization. The mandate isn't just a compliance headache. It's an opening to build a new profit center. You're being forced to invest in your parking lot anyway. The question is whether that investment becomes a permanent cost to carry, or an asset that generates revenue and pulls customers back to your stores. It's the kind of story a CFO actually wants to hear: **take a required line item and turn it into a monetizable, repeatable model across new builds.**

That solution is Level 3: DC fast charging.

L3 fits the retail experience as it already exists: short visits, convenience, predictability. When a driver can add meaningful range in 10 to 20 minutes, charging stops being a token amenity and becomes something customers will plan around. They feel the benefit immediately, they're willing to pay for speed, and they're more likely to choose your location the next time they need to charge. Fast charging turns compliance into a behavior, and behavior is what creates a business.

The physical site impact changes too. Instead of scattering dozens of chargers across the parking field, DC fast charging lets you concentrate the build into a small, intentional zone. Construction is cleaner. Wayfinding is obvious. Parking conflicts are easier to manage. Maintenance is centralized instead of distributed. And because each fast-charging port delivers meaningful throughput, you can meet the mandate with fewer assets while delivering much more usable capacity.



This is where "Monetize the Mandate" becomes real. Monetization isn't just charging revenue, though fast charging makes that far more credible. It's also incremental visits, dwell time that actually matters, and the ability to connect charging to loyalty and customer acquisition. And critically, it's easier to unlock those value layers when you own the charging assets and the on-site experience. You control pricing, uptime, brand presentation, and the value-added layers like loyalty, promotions, and customer journey integration. That's when the CMO starts leaning in, too.



Every retailer will have to respond to mandates. The only question is whether you respond with the option that makes the problem bigger, or the one that turns it into an advantage. L2 can satisfy a requirement on paper, but it often leaves you with years of complexity and low-value charging. L3 meets the mandate while aligning with how customers actually shop, and it creates a platform that can pay for itself.

And you don't have to figure it out alone. Electric Era delivers a full turnkey DC fast charging solution for new retail builds. We can work directly with your design firm and engineers, manage procurement and construction, handle installation and commissioning, and run ongoing operations and maintenance with 24/7 monitoring and support. We also offer retail integration that lets you bring your brand into the driver experience, connecting charging to the same customer journey you already manage inside the store.

About Electric Era

Electric Era is EV charging built for retail. We help retailers turn EV charging into a high-uptime, revenue-boosting customer amenity—not a utility. Our stations are uniquely built to fit seamlessly with your brand and enhance your existing experience—bringing in new traffic, increasing basket size, and driving loyalty. As your one-stop partner, we handle everything from site design and permitting, to hardware installation, maintenance, and performance insights. Our vertically-integrated approach offers an industry-leading 98%+ uptime per port guaranteed, and enables you to deploy in months with minimal disruptions to your business. Start capitalizing on the rise of EV charging today.



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