



Massachusetts Municipal Association

MMA BEST PRACTICES SERIES

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MMA Policy Committee on Energy and the Environment

Best Practice Recommendation: Municipal Investment in Electric Vehicles and Charging Stations

BEST PRACTICE: Promote alternative energy sources and decrease fossil fuel dependence by investing in electric or hybrid vehicles for municipal fleets and building charging stations on municipal property for public use.

As the global effects of climate change worsen each year, Massachusetts continues to prioritize a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and other climate-supporting measures. The Commonwealth's 2008 Global Warming Solutions Act required, by 2020, a 25 percent reduction in greenhouse gases from all sectors below the 1990 baseline level, and at least an 80 percent reduction by 2050. According to updated data released in summer 2018, as of 2016, greenhouse gas emissions were approximately 20.8 percent below 1990 baseline levels. The transportation sector is the biggest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, at 39 percent of all emissions. And while fuel efficiency improvements continue to be implemented across the transportation sector, vehicle miles driven are 28 percent higher than 1990 levels, cancelling out some of that effect.

Electric vehicle technology provides a sustainable alternative to gasoline-fueled (and greenhouse gas-emitting) vehicles. The Commonwealth's commitment to electric vehicles was solidified in 2017 when Gov. Charlie Baker signed into law an electric vehicle bill that makes it easier and more affordable for consumers to buy and use these cars. While thousands of Massachusetts residents have opted to purchase or lease electric vehicles, often with the assistance of government incentive programs, municipalities are coming around to the benefits of this mode of transportation. Municipal investment in electric vehicle fleets and publicly-sited charging stations has the potential to realize multiple benefits: helping the state to meet greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, reducing vehicle fueling costs for the municipality, and providing a charging service for residential and commercial owners of electric vehicles. Local governments that prioritize environmental and climate health are often more appealing to residents.

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection offers the Massachusetts Electric Vehicle Incentive Program to promote the purchase of electric vehicles and installation of charging stations by qualifying entities, including municipalities and other public institutions. The MassDEP reports that, to date, it has provided nearly \$2.3 million in MassEVIP grants to 83 separate entities (including approximately 75 municipalities) to purchase 267 electric vehicles for their fleets and to install 92 charging stations.

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The following are two examples of municipalities that have invested in electric vehicles for their municipal fleets and publicly-sited electric vehicle charging stations:

- New Bedford obtained 23 electric vehicles (Nissan Leaf) and 25 charging stations through a \$299,000 MassEVIP grant. The city was able to replace aging vehicles in its fleet that cost more in maintenance than their value, and to make six of the charging stations available for public use. With approximately 30 percent of its municipal fleet comprised of electric vehicles, New Bedford realized more than \$117,000 in savings over three years.
- Since 2006, Cambridge has made a commitment to convert its fleet according to a Green Fleet Policy. The policy requires that all requests for new vehicles include an evaluation of options based on fuel efficiency and emissions standards. Cambridge has introduced 25 hybrid vehicles and several fully electric vehicles into its fleet to date, and provides public access to four electric charging stations.

Resources:

- MassEVIP program: www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-massevip-fleets-incentives
- MassEVIP profile of New Bedford: www.mass.gov/files/documents/2018/10/09/massevip-newbedford.pdf
- State and Federal Electric Vehicle Funding Programs:
www.mass.gov/service-details/state-and-federal-electric-vehicle-funding-programs
- City of Cambridge Green Fleet Policy:
www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/climateandenergy/municipalsustainability/greenfleet