

Policy to Transition Belmont's Municipal Vehicle Fleet to Electric Vehicles

I. POLICY OBJECTIVES

It is the intent of this policy to create guidelines for transitioning the town fleet vehicles to run on electricity, reducing municipal greenhouse gas pollution, fleet operating costs, and demonstrating leadership in achieving Belmont's community-wide sustainability goals.

It is not the intent of this policy to require a department to take any action which conflicts with local, state, or federal requirements. Nor is it the intent of this policy to mandate the procurement of products that do not perform adequately for their intended use, to exclude adequate purchasing competition, or to require a purchase or lease when a vehicle is not available at a reasonable price.

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Increase the use of battery electric (BEV) or plugin hybrid (PHEV) vehicles in the town fleet
- Reduce total cost of ownership over the lifetime of the vehicle
- Reduce GHG emissions from the town's fleet vehicles
- Maximize the use of grant funding and incentives to procure electric and emissions-reduction technology for the town fleet

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II. DEFINITIONS

- a) BEV: Battery Electric Vehicles, also known as all-electric, have a rechargeable battery and rely on **electricity as their sole source of energy** powering at least one electric motor. Example: Chevy Bolt
- b) PHEV: Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles have a **rechargeable battery**, which powers an electric motor. They have a gasoline powered internal combustion engine, which supplements the battery. Example: Prius Prime

- c) HEV: Hybrid Electric Vehicles have a gasoline powered internal combustion engine, as well as electric motor powered by batteries, which cannot be plugged in to an external source to charge. Instead, the battery is charged through regenerative braking and in some models by the internal combustion engine. Example: Ford Escape Hybrid
- d) Standard vehicle: A vehicle that that runs solely on gasoline or diesel fuel. Example: Ford Explorer
- e) GVWR – Gross Vehicle Weight Rating refers to the vehicle’s weight and class. (Reference: EPA Emissions Classification)
- f) Heavy-duty vehicle – A vehicle with a manufacturer’s gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of more than 8,500 pounds.
- g) Light duty – A vehicle with a GVWR of less than 8,500 pounds.

III. VEHICLE PROCUREMENT

a. Electric-first procurement

Vehicle procurement should be prioritized as follows:

Battery-electric vehicle (BEV)

Plug-in hybrid vehicle (PHEV)

Hybrid-electric vehicle (HEV)

Standard vehicle

The fleet policy is **electric-first**, meaning that electric vehicles shall be prioritized when the Town purchases or leases motor vehicles for its municipal operations. Beginning in FY23, all light-duty passenger vehicles purchased or leased are required to be BEVs. Departments may request an exemption from the BEV replacement. All exemptions shall require approval by the Town Administrator.

b. Fuel-efficient requirements for standard vehicles

If it is determined that an electric vehicle (BEV or PHEV) does not meet the Town's needs, the purchased or leased vehicles must be **the most fuel-efficient class, drive train, and model available** that will fulfill the intended municipal function. The EPA fuel economy database will be used to determine the most fuel-efficient vehicle available for a particular need. (www.fueleconomy.gov)

Many vehicles that meet the above criteria can be found on statewide contract VE98: "*Purchase of Light Duty Vehicles – Passenger Cars, SUVs, Trucks, Vans, SSVs and PPVs*" located on www.commbuys.com .

c. Exempt vehicles

Vehicles exempt from the electric vehicle policy requirements currently include:

Heavy-duty trucks, such as fire trucks, ambulances, and public works trucks.

Off-road vehicles

Police cruisers are exempt, **only if** BEV or PHEV cruisers are not commercially available that meet the Belmont Police Department's requirements as determined by the Belmont Police Department Chief.

All other vehicles, including pickup trucks, vans, and police/fire administrative vehicles are **not** exempt and therefore must comply with the procurement requirements of this policy.

d. Pilot projects

Where opportunities exist, particularly if grants and new technologies are or become available, the Town should pilot electric options for heavy-duty and exempt vehicles.

e. Contracted vehicles (e.g., school buses, garbage trucks)

Where the Town contracts vehicle services (i.e., school buses, garbage and recycling trucks) the Town will seek out and give preference to

companies for competitive bidding that offer the use of electric and/or fuel-efficient vehicles.

f. Evaluation of leasing

If it is determined that an electric vehicle (BEV or PHEV) is not currently available to meet the Town's needs, the Town should consider leasing a standard vehicle to allow for flexibility to transition to an electric option if it becomes available during the life cycle of that vehicle.

IV. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

- **Annual Report:**
The Town Administrator will submit to the Select Board and the Energy Committee an annual report documenting the progress the Town has made in acquiring electric vehicles. The annual report will include a list of all electric vehicle exemptions that were granted and the rationale for each exemption.
- **Electric vehicle charging**
Where possible, efforts will be made to install charging equipment at locations convenient for municipal vehicle users to minimize operational inefficiencies. However, flexibility may be required of vehicle operators and town staff to adjust procedures to accommodate charging locations.
Electric vehicles should be scheduled to charge only during off-peak hours (as defined by Belmont Light) unless it would negatively impact town operations.
- **Funding**
The purchase of policy-compliant vehicles and equipment may be more expensive in the initial years but will cost less to operate. Departments should estimate upfront investment required for vehicle purchases and budget accordingly in capital budget requests. The Town shall evaluate existing capital requests for vehicles and evaluate opportunities to fund additional upfront costs. The Town shall take advantage of grant funding to offset the upfront costs of electric vehicles and charging apparatus.

