

Town of South Hadley – Sustainable Vehicle Policy

The South Hadley Selectboard and the South Hadley School Committee have approved the following Sustainable Vehicle Policy (“Policy”) to govern the replacement and purchase of all nonexempt municipal vehicles with the most sustainable vehicle option, as defined below.

- South Hadley Selectboard approval date: [date]
- South Hadley School Committee approval date: [date]

One purpose of this Policy is to support the town’s Green Communities Grant Program application, which aims to unlock funds for the town to reduce energy usage and expenditures.

POLICY STATEMENT

In an effort to reduce the Town of South Hadley’s fuel consumption, energy costs, save taxpayer money, and to maximize sustainability, the Selectboard and the School Committee hereby adopt a policy to purchase fuel-efficient vehicles with the lowest total cost of ownership.

It is recognized that all Town departments will take action to minimize fuel use and to minimize greenhouse gas emissions from town operations by adopting this Sustainable Vehicle Policy.

This Policy shall inform and guide all South Hadley employees regarding the purchase and efficient use of town vehicles. Town departments shall make efficient use of municipal vehicles in order to minimize the cost of town operations to taxpayers, to protect and preserve the natural environment and quality of life in South Hadley, and to reduce emissions.

PURPOSE

To establish a requirement that the Town of South Hadley purchase only fuel-efficient vehicles with the lowest lifetime cost of ownership for municipal and local public-school use. This requirement fulfills criterion 4 of the Massachusetts Green Communities Grant Program.¹

Criterion 4 requires all departments within a Green Community to purchase fuel-efficient vehicles for municipal use, whenever such vehicles are commercially available and practicable. To meet this requirement municipal governments and school districts must:

- Adopt a Fuel-Efficient Vehicle Policy requiring all municipal departments and divisions to purchase fuel-efficient vehicles,
- Develop and maintain a vehicle inventory for all four-wheeled vehicles, and
- Provide a plan for replacing non-exempt vehicles with vehicles that meet specified fuel efficiency ratings.

¹ <https://www.mass.gov/guides/becoming-a-designated-green-community#-criterion-4->

TOTAL COST OF OWNERSHIP

The Total cost of ownership (TCO) is the purchase price of a vehicle plus the costs of operation over its life span and is a way of assessing the long-term value of an asset to the town in order to save taxpayer money.

Assessing the total cost of ownership means taking a bigger picture look at the vehicle's value over time. TCO considers a vehicle's long-term costs and expenses incurred during the vehicle's useful life and ultimate disposal. The item with the lower total cost of ownership returns the better value in the long run, resulting in taxpayer savings.

The United States Department of Energy, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy provides useful information and tools for helping to determine the total cost of ownership: <https://www.fueleconomy.gov/>

For example, an electric vehicle (EV) generally costs less than a gasoline or diesel-powered vehicle over the life of the vehicle, according to numerous studies.² The lower TCO results from lower fuel costs – SHELDT electricity rates versus gasoline/diesel fuel – and maintenance savings. EV's have no need to change oil or replace spark plugs, for instance.

APPLICABILITY

This Policy applies to all divisions and departments of the Town of South Hadley.

DEFINITIONS

Combined city and highway MPG (EPA Combined fuel economy): Combined Fuel Economy means the fuel economy from driving a combination of 43 percent city and 57 Percent highway miles and is calculated as follows:

$$=1/((0.43/City\ MPG)+(0.57/Highway\ MPG))$$

Drive System: The manner in which mechanical power is directly transmitted from the drive shaft to the wheels. The following codes are used in this Policy:

- AWD = All Wheel Drive: 4 -wheel drive automatically controlled by the vehicle power train system
- 4WD = 4-Wheel Drive: driver selectable 4-wheel drive with 2-wheel drive option
- 2WD = 2-Wheel Drive

Heavy-duty vehicle: A vehicle with a manufacturer's gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of more than 8,500 pounds.

Internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicle: A vehicle powered by an internal combustion engine (gasoline or diesel).

² *Electric Vehicle Ownership Costs*. Chris Harto. Consumer Reports, October 2020.

Electric Vehicle (EV)³: A vehicle that is powered by an electric motor that draws electricity from a battery and is capable of being charged from an external source.

Hybrid Electric Vehicle (HEV): A vehicle that combines an internal combustion engine with an electric-powered motor, switching between the two to improve fuel economy. An HEV is *not* capable of being charged from an external source.

Plug-In Hybrid Electric Vehicle (PHEV): A vehicle that combines an internal combustion engine with an electric-powered motor, switching between the two to improve fuel economy. A PHEV is capable of being charged from an external source.

Level 2 EV Charging Station: A charging station that delivers an electrical current from a hardwired unit to the vehicle via the connector. Level 2 equipment offers high-rate alternating current (AC) charging through 240 Volt electrical service, and is common for home, workplace, and public charging. Level 2 chargers can charge an EV to 80 percent from empty in 4-10 hours (overnight) and a PHEV in 1-2 hours.

GUIDELINES

All departments/divisions shall purchase only fuel-efficient vehicles with the lowest lifetime ownership cost for municipal use whenever such vehicles are commercially available and practicable.

The Town of South Hadley will develop and maintain an annual vehicle inventory for *all* vehicles, both exempt and non-exempt. The town will also develop and maintain a plan for replacing any non-exempt vehicles with vehicles that meet the fuel efficiency ratings below. If an EV or PHEV is not available to meet the need, the replacement vehicle must meet, at a minimum, the fuel efficiency ratings contained in the most recent guidance for Criterion 4 published by the MA Department of Energy Resources' Green Communities Division.

The following fuel efficiency ratings are set to ensure that at least five or more automatic transmission models of mass production are available for sale in Massachusetts (all from affordable brands; no luxury brands). Based on 2019 EPA data, vehicles are to have a combined city and highway MPG no less than the following:

- 2-wheel drive car: 30 MPG
- 4-wheel drive car: 29 MPG
- 2-wheel drive van 22 MPG
- 4-wheel drive van 20 MPG
- 2-wheel drive pick-up truck: 21 MPG

³ Also known as BEV (battery electric vehicle)

- 4-wheel drive pick-up truck: 18 MPG
- 2-wheel drive sport utility vehicle: 24 MPG
- 4-wheel drive sport utility vehicle: 21 MPG

Electric vehicles or hybrid or vehicles in those classes will meet these criteria.

EXEMPTIONS Vehicles that are exempt from the municipal Fuel Efficient Vehicle Policy include off-road vehicles, motorcycles and heavy-duty vehicles. Heavy-Duty vehicles are defined as having a manufacturer's gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of more than 8,500 pounds. Examples include fire engines, ambulances, and some public works vehicles. In addition, police cruisers are currently exempt from this criterion due to market availability; however, starting in FY 26 (July 1, 2025), police cruisers will no longer be exempt and new acquisitions will have to adhere to this policy. While these vehicles remain exempt from the policy, municipalities are encouraged to consider acquiring hybrid and zero-emission models as they replace existing cruisers. Police and fire department administrative vehicles **MUST** meet fuel efficient requirements. PLEASE NOTE: If a vehicle is found on www.fueleconomy.gov, then it has a GVWR of less than 8,500 pounds, is NOT a heavy-duty vehicle and is NOT exempt.

It is the responsibility of the Town of South Hadley to check the Green Communities Division's Guidance for Criterion 4 for updates prior to ordering replacement vehicles.

In order to implement this policy, the town will install a sufficient number of Level 2 EV charging stations to support electric vehicles or hybrid-electric vehicles as they are purchased. Those charging stations will be installed in the parking facilities or areas where town vehicles are stored overnight.

Plug-in hybrid-electric vehicles will be operated from battery power whenever possible, minimizing the use of the internal combustion engine, and will be recharged overnight.

Exemptions

Heavy-duty vehicles: examples include fire-trucks, ambulances, and some public works trucks that meet the definition of heavy-duty vehicle.

Police and fire department administrative vehicles are *not* exempt and must meet fuel-efficient requirements.

Inventory

The following information will be included in the vehicle inventory list (Appendix A), which shall be updated on an annual basis and provided to the Massachusetts Green Communities Division.

NOTE: Departments/Divisions may use EPA combined city and highway MPG estimates or actual combined MPG.

- Department
- Model Year
- Manufacturer & Model
- GVW > 8500 pounds? (Y or N)
- Exempt or non-exempt
- Drive System: 2 WD, 4WD or AWD
- Propulsion: ICE, EV, HEV or PHEV
- MPG Rating (leave blank for EVs)

QUESTIONS / ENFORCEMENT

All other inquiries should be directed to the department/division responsible for fleet management and/or fleet procurement. This Policy shall be enforced by the Town Administrator and/or her designee(s).

APPENDIX A – CRITERION 4 REQUIREMENTS

To meet Criterion Four of the Green Communities Program, municipalities need to adopt by action of the local official or body with authority to enact municipal policies a written Fuel-Efficient Vehicle Policy that requires municipal departments and divisions to purchase only fuel-efficient vehicles (See Appendix A, model policy). Both general government and school districts are required to enact a fuel-efficient vehicle policy for a municipality to meet this requirement, and letters documenting adoption must be provided and signed by the appropriate municipal authorities, as noted below. Letters from other municipal officials are not acceptable.

For letters from the general government and school district:

- General Government – The general government must provide a letter from the Chief Executive Officer of the city or town stating that it has adopted the Fuel-Efficient Vehicle Policy. The Chief Executive Officer is defined as the manager in any city having a manager and in any town having a city form of government, the mayor in any other city, and the Board of Selectmen in any other town unless some other officer or body is designated to perform the functions of a Chief Executive Officer under the provisions of a local charter or laws having the force of a charter.
- Public School Districts - For a municipality to meet this requirement, its public school district must provide a letter from the School Superintendent stating that it has adopted the FuelEfficient Vehicle Policy. Please note that even if the school has no vehicles, or only has vehicles that are exempt from the Policy, adoption of the Policy by the school must be provided since the school may acquire non-exempt vehicles in the future.

APPENDIX B - SAMPLE TOWN ADOPTION LETTER

Letter must be on Town Letterhead

MA Department of Energy Resources
Green Communities Division
100 Cambridge Street – Suite 1040
Boston, MA 02114

[DATE OF LETTER]

At a public Board of Selectmen meeting held on [DATE], the Board of Selectmen of South Hadley voted to adopt the attached Fuel Efficiency Vehicle Policy.

Thank you,

Signature and Typed Name of Chair