

ALTERNATIVES TO THE TRADITIONAL AUTOMOBILE

State spending on Transportation³

The State of Vermont's overall transportation budget increased between 2004 and 2006. Certain increases within that budget promote strategies and physical infrastructures that reduce petroleum dependence and reliance on single occupancy vehicles (SOV). Spending for alternatives decreased from fiscal years 2004 to 2005 and then increased slightly in 2006. The table below includes selected traditional transportation spending items for comparison and line items for categories that may reduce reliance on SOV.

Spending on public transit has remained constant. Spending has decreased for pedestrian and bicycle facilities and rail, and increased for park and ride facilities.

Table: Total Spent by Fiscal year⁴

Budget line items*	FY 2004	FY2005	FY2006
Paving +maintenance	24%	24%	29%
Roadway	7%	19%	14%
Bridges (including maintenance of)	6%	8%	9%
Town Programs	17%	15%	15%
Finance, Planning, DMV	10%	11%	11%
Public transit	4%	4%	4%
Ped & bike	2%	1%	1%
Park & ride	<1%	1%	1%
Multi-modal	<1%	<1%	<1%
Rail	4%	3%	3%
Total transportation budget	\$345 million	\$359 million	\$371 million
% spent on alternatives	10.4%	8.4%	9.0%

*Items in bold within the table are considered line items for alternatives to the SOV.

Source: Joint Fiscal Office

Bus Ridership

Public transit ridership increased between 2005 and 2006.

Table: Bus Ridership in Fiscal Years 2005 and 2006.

	FY 05	FY 06	% Increase
Total	3,757,248	3,923,502	9.3%

Alternative Fuel Vehicles

In 2006 there were a total of 2,677 known alternative fuel vehicles in the state. Data for all fuel categories except for hybrid electric vehicles (HEVs) were obtained via phone survey of fleets. The survey may not have covered all fleets or vehicle owners. Data for HEVs was obtained from the Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles. The data for biodiesel has an unknown, but probably significant, margin of error, due to the fact that any diesel vehicle can use biodiesel without any authorities being aware of it. Vehicles which run on recycled vegetable oil (also known as ‘grease’) are not characterized below because it is not a reported fuel type and typically used by private vehicle owners.

Table: Alternative Fuel Vehicles (AFV) in 2006

Fuel type	Vehicle type	# in the state
B100 (100% Biodiesel)	Light-Duty	0
B20 (20% Biodiesel)	Light-Duty	38
B20 (20% Biodiesel)	Heavy-Duty	101
Electricity	Light-Duty	4
LPG (Liquefied Petroleum Gas)	Light-Duty	13
NEV (Neighborhood Electric Vehicle)	Light-Duty	9
LPG (Liquefied Petroleum Gas)	Heavy-Duty	107
CNG (Compressed Natural Gas)	Light-Duty	8
CNG (Compressed Natural Gas)	Heavy-Duty	6
Plug-in Hybrid	Light-Duty	1
H2 (Hydrogen)	Light-Duty	1
HEV (Hybrid Electric Vehicle)	Light-Duty	2,389
Total		2,677

Source: Vermont Clean Cities Coalition: Annual Alternative Fuel Vehicle Fleet Survey (conducted in January 2007), except for HEV data from Vermont DMV⁵.

Inducements to Drive Less

Vermonters expressing a willingness to try alternatives to the automobile have steadily increased according to public opinion surveys. In a 2000 VTrans survey, two thirds of the Vermonters polled said there were no actions that would cause them to drive less. In a matching 2006 survey of 600 Vermonters also coordinated by VTrans, the number of Vermonters who said there were no actions that would cause them to drive less had dropped to 37 percent. Alternatives mentioned included 22 percent said better public transit and 7 percent mentioned commuter rail, for a total of 29 percent transit. Another 17 percent mentioned higher gasoline taxes.

In 2007, The University Transportation Center commissioned the Center for Rural Studies to include survey questions related to transportation alternatives in their annual Vermonter Poll. Five hundred sixty-five households were asked what actions, circumstances, or transportation alternatives might encourage them to drive their car less.

The highest number of people responded that they would drive less if public transportation were improved. Out of the available choices, the least number of people indicated that increased gas prices would encourage them to drive less.

Table: Inducements to drive less

Option	% respondents
Improved Public Transportation	34%
Alternative Forms of Transportation	15%
Increased Gas Prices	11%
OTHER	15%
Don't know/nothing	26%

Source: Center for Rural Studies: Vermonter Poll, February, 2007

