

The Mercer Island “Oil-Free Transportation Plan”

20% oil-free by 2020; 50% by 2030; 100% by 2040

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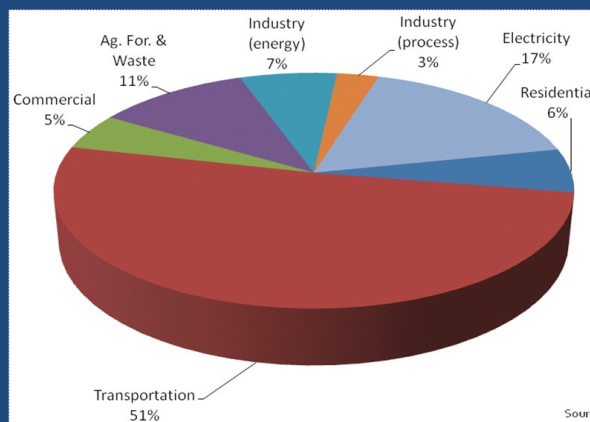
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There is nothing that would do more good, more quickly for the environment at less cost, than to move from oil to electricity in transportation.

Mercer Island is in an ideal position to be a leader as well as a showcase for the transition away from oil in transportation. With its central location, confined geography, moderate climate and relatively clean electric power, Mercer Island should be among the first to set tough, but realistic goals and develop a plan to be oil-free in local transportation by 2040.

Transportation is the single largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the Puget Sound region. Thanks to our hydroelectric system and our other carbon-free power sources, we have one of the cleanest power systems in the country, which will become even cleaner with additional wind power and other carbon free sources as well as conservation. A focus on oil-free transportation is essential.

Transportation Produces 51% of Puget Sound Greenhouse Gas Emissions



Moving from Oil to Electricity Will Cut the OPEC Tax, Improve the Economy and Create Jobs.

In Washington State we burn 3.6 billion gallons of gasoline a year. According to the Washington State Transportation Commission, we spent \$16 billion dollars to buy gasoline and diesel fuel in 2008. By comparison we spent only \$9 billion on K-12 education and face a \$2.6 billion state budget deficit that will result in service cuts and increased fees and taxes.

Because we produce no oil in Washington, the billions we spend each year on importing oil works like a tax on our economy. Because oil revenues wind up mostly in the hands of Middle East oil countries, we are paying what is essentially an OPEC oil tax. Moving from imported oil to domestic electricity is one of the most efficient ways to help our national, state and local economy. Future oil price increases will act like a brake on our economy unless and until we have alternatives to oil. Prices are predicted to rise to \$95 a barrel by the end of the year and to \$175 a barrel by 2016. Cutting the OPEC tax means moving to electricity in transportation is the most cost efficient way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The cost of electricity for electric vehicles is about 50 cents a gallon equivalent. The cost per mile to run an electric car is 2 cents compared to 12 to 15 cents for a gasoline powered car.

The Cars and Light Trucks that Run on Electricity Are Coming this Year to Our State and Community.

By the end of this year, the Seattle region will have 2,500 charging stations for electric cars under an innovative federal grant. We are one of five regions in the U.S. to receive infrastructure funding. It is important for Mercer Island to help shape the decisions on where to locate the charging stations.

Also, 900 selected people who buy a Nissan all-electric Leaf this year will receive a free charging station in their garage as part of the federal grant program.



Other plug-in electric vehicles will also soon be available including the Chevy Volt, the all-electric Ford Focus and the Ford Transit Connect van. Buyers of these plug-in electric cars will receive a \$7,500 federal income tax credit and will pay no state sales tax this year.

A Mercer Island Implementation Plan

Mercer Island should prepare a comprehensive, integrated implementation plan. As one key initial step, Mercer Island should work with Sound Transit on the design of its light rail station, to ensure that it is optimized for oil-free transportation with charging stations and other features to encourage Mercer Island residents to park and recharge their electric cars at the new transportation hub and then take alternative transportation including car pools, van pools, Microsoft Connectors, rapid bus as well as light rail. Other amenities such as coffee stands, a video conference facility, pick up kiosks for UPS and Fed-Ex as well as goods ordered through Amazon and others, should be designed into the transportation hub to make the center attractive, safe and convenient.

Mercer Island should also take the lead with federal grants help make the move from diesel to plug-in electric school buses, and to test plug-in electric U.S. post office delivery vehicles. The size, limited speed, moderate climate and other factors make Mercer Island an ideal place for the first electric test school buses and mail trucks.

Mercer Island can also take a leadership role in working with the state and other local governments on a purchasing pool for the coming electric vehicles and to make early pre-orders contingent on a life cycle analysis to demonstrate the lower total ownership costs.

Finally, Mercer Island should formally adopt the goal to be oil-free for local transportation by 2040 and to set interim goals and a step by step set of measures to meet those goals. The measures would include plug-in charging stations for public parking areas including city parking facilities, the community center, parks, and city hall, as well as the new Sound Transit light rail station and the existing North end Park & Ride lot.. Appropriate ordinances can be enacted for new and existing commercial parking areas and new residential and commercial construction to accommodate charging stations.

By taking early action, we will not only do more to reduce greenhouse gas emissions on Mercer Island than any other single step, but we can help develop an integrated prototype that can be adopted in communities across the county.