OVERVIEW

How to Use this Guide:

This guide is intended to be a straightforward, easy-to-use document that provides purchasers considering electric vehicles with:

- A general understanding of the concepts and benefits of purchasing low- or zero-emissions vehicles
- Resources for funding
- Recommended vehicle options (including alternatives for vehicle classes whose needs are not currently met by the available low- or zero-emissions vehicles available)
- An overview of the purchasing process at Penn
- Information on infrastructure and other support

Released in October 2019, the Penn’s Climate and Sustainability Action Plan (CSAP) 3.0 represents a vision for the University’s sustainable future. In accordance with this vision and to reduce Penn’s carbon and other emissions that impact human health, CSAP 3.0 aims to encourage the purchase of low- or zero-emissions vehicles at Penn.

These vehicles are not only beneficial to the environment and reducing our carbon footprint; they also reduce the negative impact on human health, particularly in terms of air pollution, which leads to health conditions such as asthma and even lung cancer. The American Lung Association’s 2021 State of the Air report placed Philadelphia as the 17th most air polluted city in the United States. Some of the main driving factors of Philadelphia’s polluted air are local emissions, including those that come from Penn’s vehicles.

Recognition of the social and environmental impacts of University vehicles is particularly important given the environmental inequity that exists in the communities surrounding Penn’s main campus, especially in those that are low-income. Contributions to Philadelphia’s air quality also impact the University, both in maintenance costs and impacts to the health of faculty and staff. For Penn employees who live locally, vehicle emissions put themselves and their families at risk for the negative health impacts mentioned above.

The two main vehicle types that will be emphasized in this guide are battery electric vehicles (BEVs) and plugin hybrid electric vehicles (PHEV). When possible, preference should be given to electric vehicles (EVs) due to their greater ability to contribute to Penn’s goal of carbon neutrality by 2042.

For any questions about the information within this document, please contact Natalie Walker in the Penn Sustainability Office at sustainability@upenn.edu.