



## Driving EV Uptake in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area: How Driver Perceptions Shape Electric Vehicle Ownership in the GTHA

Media Backgrounder, May 2017

### We need to accelerate EV uptake in the GTHA

Transportation is responsible for more greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions than any other sector in Ontario. We won't reach Ontario's climate targets without electrifying the transportation sector. This will require a dramatic acceleration in the uptake of electric vehicles (EVs). The province's goal is to grow EVs' share of new car sales from less than 1 per cent today to 5 per cent by 2020.

### It's never been more attractive to own an EV

Switching to an EV is increasingly attractive: more and more models are on the market and more are coming in the years ahead – including mid-size, compact, SUVs and vans. Ontario offers up to \$14,000 in purchase incentives. The newly-opened Plug'n Drive EV Discovery Centre gives drivers a stress-free place to learn about, compare and test-drive a broad selection of EVs (free of charge). Ontario's energy mix ensures that EVs yield GHG savings of as much as 90 per cent compared to gas-powered cars.

### A first-of-its-kind survey to identify barriers

What's keeping drivers from making the switch? What can we learn from those who did? To find out, Plug'n Drive commissioned a survey of conventional gas car owners and EV owners in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA), Canada's largest and fastest growing urban region. Conducted by the polling company Research Now, the survey interviewed 1,000 gas car owners and 192 EV owners in the fall of 2016. The survey results reveal that widespread uptake of EVs is impeded by a number of barriers, both real and perceived. The full report can be found at [plugndrive.ca/EVsurvey](http://plugndrive.ca/EVsurvey). Here are the most notable findings and recommendations.

### Key Findings

The survey of 1,000 gas car owners found:

1. **Significant lack of awareness of EV purchase incentives**
2. **Limited knowledge of long-term cost savings**
3. **Common misperception that EVs lack range, so-called 'range anxiety'**
4. **Low awareness of the link between car choice and climate or GHG impacts**

### Recommended Actions

As an overarching recommendation, we suggest that the Ontario government and vehicle manufacturers collaborate on a coordinated EV information campaign. It should focus on the value, performance and sustainability of EVs – especially awareness-raising for existing purchase incentives.

## Get the word out about EV incentives

UNDERLYING FINDING	NEXT STEPS
Many gasoline-powered car owners (31 per cent) perceive EVs as too expensive, but few know about incentive programs that might tip the affordability balance. Ontario's current EV buyer incentives of up to \$14,000 can bridge the affordability gap.	The Ontario government and vehicle manufacturers should collaborate on a coordinated campaign to raise public awareness of available purchase incentives.

## Emphasize the long-term cost savings from EVs

UNDERLYING FINDING	NEXT STEPS
On average, EVs save drivers \$1,900 per year in operational costs compared to gasoline-powered car. While EV owners experience these savings first-hand, most gas-powered car owners are unaware of them.	Government and industry should undertake an awareness campaign that emphasizes the "total cost of ownership" – a figure that includes purchase price, fuel costs and maintenance over the entire ownership period of a vehicle.

## Tackle the myths behind 'range anxiety'

UNDERLYING FINDING	NEXT STEPS
'Range anxiety' is frequently cited by gasoline-powered car owners (13 per cent) as a reason for not going electric. However, surveyed EV owners report traveling farther and more frequently than gas car owners – for both work and leisure.	Government-industry efforts are needed to make gas-powered car owners aware that an EV's travel range is more than enough to meet the daily demands of most GTHA drivers – and that one weekly charge is sufficient for the average driver.

## Connect car choice and climate change

UNDERLYING FINDING	NEXT STEPS
Almost half of surveyed gas-powered car owners do not believe that a worldwide switch to EVs would help to mitigate climate change.	Awareness campaigns should emphasize the importance of an individual's car-buying choice in reducing GHG emissions.

## Make EV infrastructure a priority

UNDERLYING FINDING	NEXT STEPS
Surveyed EV drivers lamented the lack of public charging stations and EV-designated parking spots. Likewise, few condos and workplaces offer EV charging stations.	All levels of government, developers and Business Improvement Areas should focus on expanding EV charging infrastructure. EV-only parking space rules also need to be more strictly enforced.

## Recruit EV ambassadors

UNDERLYING FINDING	NEXT STEPS
Most EV owners bought their first EV after being introduced to one by a peer. EV owners are overwhelmingly satisfied with their choice and make effective EV ambassadors.	Manufacturers and dealers should leverage peer-to-peer consultation and information sharing, combined with an incentivized referral program.

Please see [plugndrive.ca/EVsurvey](https://plugndrive.ca/EVsurvey) for the full report and media release.

The EV Survey Report  
is supported by:



For more information contact Plug'n Drive: 647-717-6941 [brian@plugndrive.ca](mailto:brian@plugndrive.ca) [www.plugndrive.ca](https://www.plugndrive.ca)