

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE PURSUANT TO ACT 168 OF 2026, SECTION 11

Report on Mileage-based User Fee Public Outreach and Education; User Experience

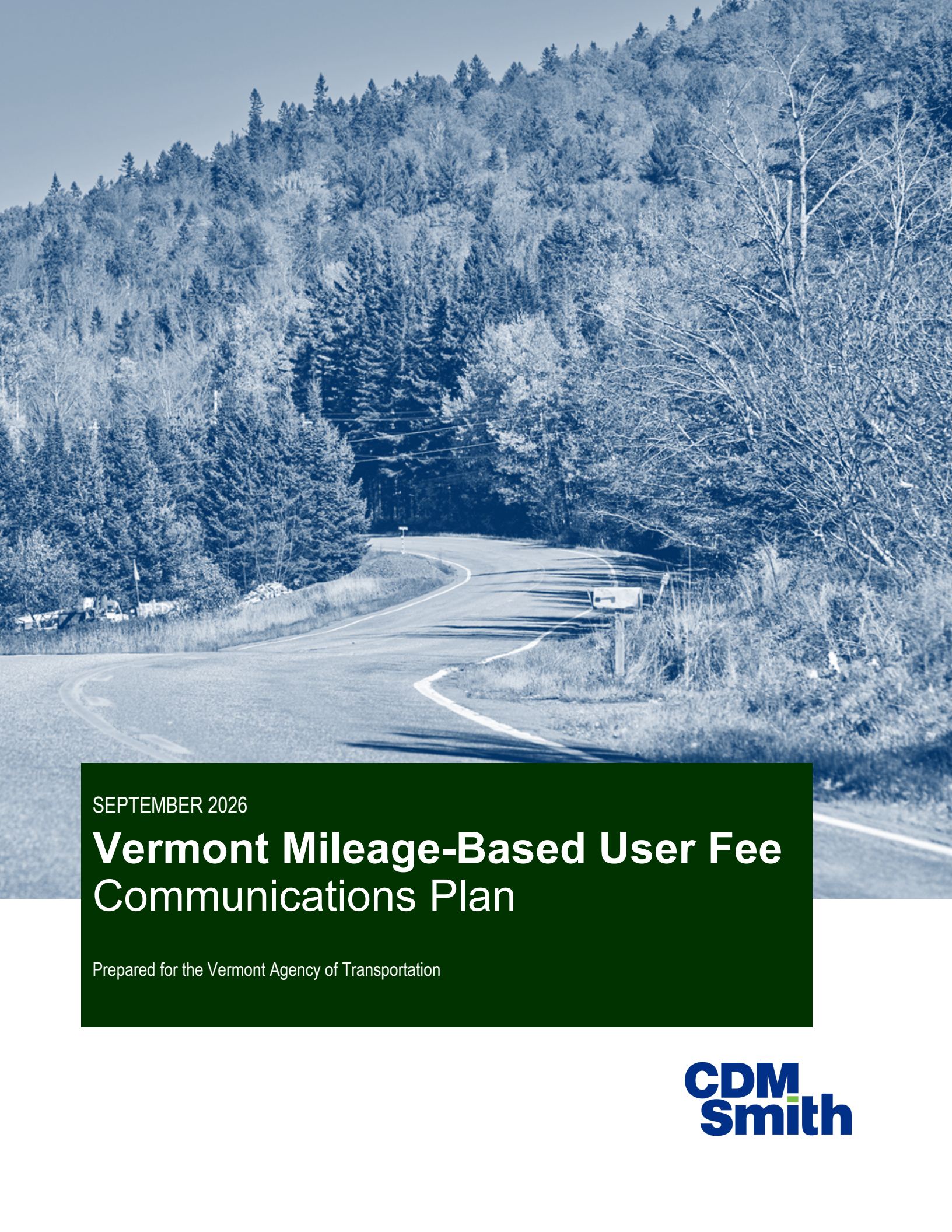
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The Vermont Joint Transportation Oversight Committee (JTOC)

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Vermont Mileage-Based User Fee Communications Plan

Prepared for the Vermont Agency of Transportation

CDM
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1.0 Introduction

Vermont is transitioning from several years of mileage-based user fee (MBUF) research, feasibility analysis, and implementation planning toward an operational MBUF program for battery electric vehicles (BEVs) that goes live on January 1, 2027. The Vermont legislature's Act 168 (2026) establishes the initial program framework and replaces the initial EV infrastructure fee for BEVs with a mileage-based approach intended to better reflect vehicle use and respond to the State's changing transportation funding environment.

This transition represents a significant shift for Vermont vehicle owners and lessees as well as Vermont Agency of Transportation (AOT) and Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) staff, dealerships, and inspection stations. Because of this, the transition will require clear, consistent, and sustained communication to support public awareness and understanding, compliance readiness with MBUF program requirements, and successful implementation.

1.1 Context for Communications Strategy

The MBUF program is one component of Vermont's broader effort to sustain the Transportation Fund. Increasing vehicle fuel efficiency and adoption of vehicles that use little or no fuel are contributing to declining and stagnant fuel-tax revenues. At the same time, inflation and rising construction, maintenance, labor, and material costs are increasing the resources required to sustain Vermont's transportation system. These pressures affect roads and bridges as well as the broader transportation investments Vermonters rely on, including public transit, rail, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, community mobility programs, and other services supported through the Transportation Fund. Maintaining the Transportation Fund's capacity is therefore relevant to Vermont's infrastructure, mobility, economic, and environmental objectives.

This broader context is important to the communications strategy. While the initial MBUF program applies to a relatively small population of BEV owners and lessees, the underlying transportation challenge affects all Vermonters. This creates an opportunity to move beyond explaining only the mechanics of the program and toward building a broader understanding of *why* Vermont's transportation funding must evolve as the vehicle fleet changes.

Understanding this, AOT is establishing this communications strategy for two complementary purposes:

1. Support successful implementation for covered vehicle owners and lessees by explaining program requirements, including mileage reporting, financial impact, payment options, and timing of payment collection

2. Build broader awareness and understanding of Vermont's transportation funding needs, why the funding model must evolve as the vehicle fleet changes, and how an MBUF contributes to a sustainable and equitable long-term approach

The first purpose requires timely and actionable information for directly affected customers and operational actors supporting them. The second includes future customers, policymakers, stakeholder organizations, and the broader public. All audiences need to understand why Vermont's transportation funding approach is changing, while directly affected customers need to understand what they must do, when they must do it, and where they can obtain support.

1.2 Program Milestones

The MBUF program will unfold over two key milestones: BEV mileage reporting and MBUF payment.

January 1, 2027: Mileage Reporting Begins for BEVs

The initial mileage reporting period for BEV owners and lessees begins with their vehicle's first annual inspection of 2027 or when they purchase or lease a covered vehicle in 2027. This means it is essential for BEV owners and lessees to understand:

- Why the MBUF program is being implemented
- How the MBUF is calculated
- How the program relates to existing vehicle registration fees, including the EV infrastructure fee, and transportation funding mechanisms
- The importance of completing their annual inspection if they want their MBUF assessment in 2028 to be based on reported mileage rather than the default flat fee of \$178, potentially resulting in a lower assessment
- What MBUF they will owe if they sell their BEV in 2027
- What payment choices will be available to them once they need to pay their MBUF assessment

While 2027 does not introduce any new steps for inspection stations, dealerships, or most drivers, this period presents a strong opportunity to raise awareness about the MBUF program and reinforce how much of the customer experience will remain familiar in the near-term. Communications can help explain that customers will continue obtaining annual safety inspections through existing processes while learning how mileage information may be used to calculate future MBUF assessments. These communications can also help customers understand how compliance with program

requirements may result in a potentially lower MBUF assessment based on mileage reported rather than the default flat fee.

While inspection stations will continue to record and report odometer readings to the Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) through existing processes, they may also provide customers with information about the MBUF program through printed materials, QR codes, or other resources directing customers to the program website.

Dealerships present an especially important customer touchpoint. Employees often spend significant time with buyers during the vehicle purchase process and serve as an important channel for distributing registration-related information and educating new BEV owners and lessees about the MBUF program.

Finally, owners who sell a BEV during 2027 may trigger their first MBUF assessment. Helping these customers understand the MBUF program *before* this moment will be essential to managing expectations. As trusted customer touchpoints, inspection stations and vehicle dealerships can help reinforce awareness of the MBUF program and direct customers to reliable information sources.

In 2028: Most Continuing BEV Owners and Lessees Receive Their First MBUF Assessment

Beginning in 2028, most continuing BEV owners and lessees will receive their first MBUF assessment. Some customers may receive an earlier assessment if they sell their covered vehicle in 2027, while the timing for newly purchased or leased vehicles will depend on when their applicable reporting period begins and ends. Before this milestone, it will be essential for covered vehicle owners to understand:

- When their first MBUF assessment will occur based on their applicable reporting period
- How much they may be expected to pay, as well as the most they would be expected to pay (\$178)
- What their payment options will be
- How they can make their first payment
- The consequences of not paying their MBUF, both for their wallets and for transportation in the state

Because the new law takes effect in January 2027, mileage reporting periods will not begin at the same times for all BEV owners and lessees. Some reporting periods will formally begin in early 2027, while others will begin later based on vehicle purchase, lease, registration, and inspection timing. MBUF assessments will generally follow

completion of the applicable reporting period.¹ Communications should therefore help customers understand the dates and requirements that apply to their individual circumstances rather than presenting January 1, 2027, as the start of every customer's reporting period.

1.3 Customer Choice and Information Needs

The program is designed around customer choice. Depending on options ultimately offered by the Commissioner, covered vehicle owners and lessees ("Customers") may choose among multiple approaches for paying their MBUF. Customers will have a mileage-based option, a flat-rate option, and, if offered by the Commissioner, a pay-as-you-go option. This means clear communication about available options, tradeoffs, requirements, and key dates will be particularly important.

Customers will need to understand:

- Why the program is being implemented
- Whether the program applies to them and their vehicle
- How mileage will be reported
- How charges are calculated
- What choices are available to them for payment
- What actions are required to remain current on MBUF payments and implications of failing to pay the MBUF
- How the program relates to existing vehicle registration fees and transportation funding mechanisms

All of these aspects of communicating how and why a person pays an MBUF are important. The information needs to be presented succinctly and in a way that drivers can easily understand without requiring significant time or effort to process. This clarity is equally important for DMV staff and others working directly with customers, who need to be able to explain the program consistently and answer questions quickly and accurately.

¹ Customer payment experiences may vary during the initial years of implementation due to transition provisions and credits established under Act 168. For example, some customers may experience limited or no MBUF payment obligations during the early years of the program after applicable credits are applied. As implementation progresses and future program milestones are reached, customer communications may need to adapt to changing customer experiences, payment expectations, and participation requirements.

2.0 Communications and Engagement Plan

2.1 Strategy Purpose and Scope

Communications and engagement will play a critical role in supporting customer understanding, building confidence in the program, minimizing confusion, and gathering feedback to inform and improve the program. These efforts must extend beyond eligible vehicle owners to include policymakers, stakeholder organizations, partner agencies, and the broader public.

This strategy aims to prepare for Vermont's transition to a statewide MBUF program by outlining engagement goals, messaging, strategies, tactics, and metrics necessary before, during, and following program implementation. It draws on lessons from MBUF implementation efforts in Oregon, Utah, Virginia, and Hawai'i, as well as national, regional, and Vermont-specific MBUF communications research.

For planning purposes, the strategy addresses activities from fall 2026 through September 30, 2028. This timeframe defines the strategy's primary planning horizon but does not imply that communications and engagement should end when the current federal grant period concludes. The State can continue building on the foundation laid as the program matures and Vermont considers future expansion.

2.2 Communications Goals and Objectives

Vermont's communications strategy is designed to support both successful implementation of the initial BEV-focused MBUF program and broader understanding of Vermont's transportation funding challenges. The communications goals described in Table 1 are intended to guide audience segmentation, message development, communications methods, performance measurement, and future program evolution.

Table 1: Communication Goals and Objectives

Goals	Objectives
Build broad awareness. <i>What is the Vermont MBUF program and why is Vermont doing this?</i>	Build awareness of: • Vermont's transportation funding challenges. • The purpose of the MBUF program. • How sustainable transportation funding supports Vermont's roads, bridges, transit, rail, and other transportation investments.
Increase understanding. <i>What does the program require for covered vehicles?</i>	Increase understanding of: • MBUF program requirements. • Available payment options. • Key dates, customer responsibilities, and the implications of compliance and non-compliance.

Goals	Objectives
Prepare covered vehicle owners for MBUF program milestones and compliance. <i>What does the program require for owners and lessees and when?</i>	• Prepare BEV owners and lessees to successfully comply with mileage reporting requirements beginning January 1, 2027 by providing information about: ○ Requirements that begin on January 1, 2027 ○ Available payment options. ○ Key dates, customer responsibilities, and the implications of compliance and non-compliance. • Drive utilization of and payment on myDMV.com where possible.
Support customer confidence and successful participation. <i>How can covered vehicle owners participate smoothly?</i>	Provide transparent, accessible, and customer-focused communications that help participants understand mileage reporting, billing, payment, customer support resources, and available options.
Build readiness for future program expansion. <i>What is next for the program?</i>	Create awareness among Vermonters to support future program evolution, including potential expansion to PHEVs and additional mileage reporting options.
Gather feedback and improve customer experience. <i>How can the program be improved?</i>	Use focused engagement and user-centered tools to inform messaging, implementation, and future program and policy decisions.

2.3 Topline Messaging

The following message themes are aligned to the communication goals and reflect what Vermonters need to understand throughout their interactions with the MBUF program, from building awareness and understanding through participation and future program evolution. Specific messages may be tailored to different audiences, but communications should consistently reinforce these themes throughout implementation.

Theme 1: Why Vermont Is Implementing an MBUF

- Vermonters depend on roads for work, school, and recreation. To keep these roads in safe and reliable condition, Vermont depends on revenue from the fuel tax drivers pay when they fill up at the pump.
- As cars become more fuel-efficient or use no fossil fuels at all, Vermont, like many other states across the country, will continue to see less revenue from existing fuel taxes.
- The Vermont MBUF program seeks to address this challenge by providing a way for BEVs to continue contributing to transportation funding through a fee based on road use rather than fuel purchases. For covered vehicles (BEVs), the MBUF will replace the current EV infrastructure fee.

Theme 2: How the MBUF Program Supports Long-Term Transportation Funding and Environmental Goals

- The program is part of Vermont's broader effort to create a sustainable and equitable long-term transportation funding approach.
- The Vermont MBUF program is an important step toward stable revenue for maintaining Vermont's existing transportation system while building what we need to meet our climate action targets and mobility goals.
- MBUF is intended to help transportation users continue contributing fairly to the transportation system they rely on, with BEV owners and lessees serving as the first group subject to the program.

Theme 3: How the MBUF Program Is Designed Around Simplicity, Transparency, Customer Choice, and Privacy

- The State has conducted research and drawn from lessons learned in other states to develop an MBUF program that is fair, transparent, and sustainable for Vermont and Vermonters.
- The program leverages existing customer touchpoints, including annual inspections and registration activities, and provides customers with choices in how they participate.
- The Vermont MBUF program respects drivers' privacy and time by leveraging odometer readings that are part of drivers' annual safety inspection.

2.4 Initial Assessment of Vermont BEV Characteristics

Understanding the size, characteristics, and geographic distribution of Vermont's current BEV population provides a foundation for audience segmentation, engagement phasing, and direct customer communications planning. These data can help identify geographic concentrations of immediately affected customers and inform outreach priorities.

Vermont has a population topping 647,000, according to Vermont Department of Health estimates.

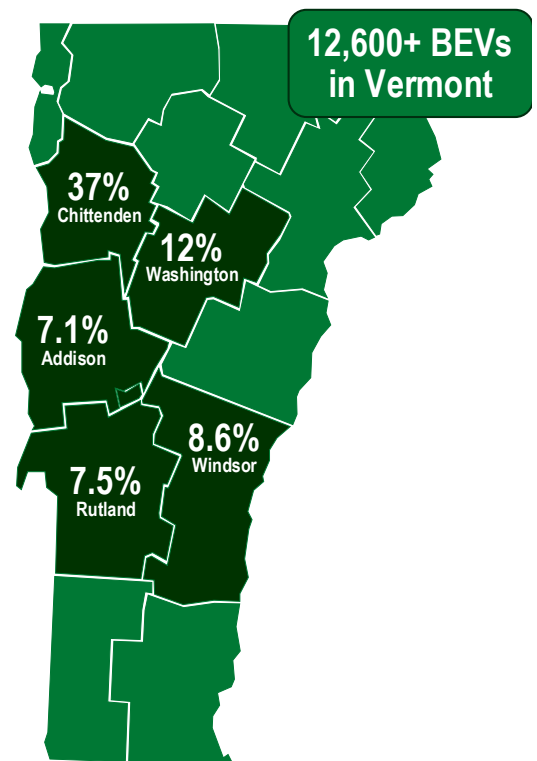


Figure 1: County Concentration of BEVs

Drive Electric Vermont counts registered all-electric electric vehicles (EVs) at over 12,600 as of 2026.² Chittenden County has the highest rate of all-electric EV ownership, accounting for about 37% of the state's EVs. Washington, Windsor, Rutland, and Addison Counties also have significant shares of the state's registered BEVs (Figure 1). These concentrations help inform outreach priorities, stakeholder engagement, and legislative briefings.

National research suggests EV drivers are more likely to have higher household incomes (56%)³ and identify environmental concerns as a primary motivator for going electric (74%). Vermont's BEV population may differ from national patterns in important ways, especially regarding income; Vermont is likely to have a higher proportion of EV drivers coming from mid- and lower-income households due to the State's disbursement of \$23.5 million EV adoption incentives between 2019 and 2025.⁴ During this time, the State distributed nearly 7,000 incentives aimed at bringing EV access to a broad range of Vermonters, including:⁵

- Up to \$5,000 incentives for more than 3,000 Vermonters with lower incomes purchasing new BEVs or plug-in hybrids.
- Up to \$5,000 incentives for more than 1,200 Vermonters with lower incomes purchasing used BEVs or hybrids

Understanding this context will be essential to understanding the wide range of questions and concerns covered vehicle owners may have about the MBUF program.

2.5 Audience Segments

Different audiences have different information needs, levels of interest, and roles in successful MBUF implementation. While some audiences will participate directly in the initial program, others will support implementation, influence public understanding, or become potential participants in future program phases. Communications methods, messages, and timing should therefore be tailored to each audience's relationship to the program.

² Drive Electric Vermont. Vermont EV Registration Trends: April 2026. April 2026. PDF. Accessed August 31, 2026. https://www.driveelectricvt.com/uploads/media/Documents/Maps/vt_ev_registration_trends.pdf.

³ Motor & Wheels. "Electric Car Demographics: 34 Buyer Facts (Numbers & Stats)." *Motor & Wheels*. Accessed August 31, 2026. <https://motorandwheels.com/electric-car-demographics/>.

⁴ Drive Electric Vermont. "How Vermont's Clean Transportation Incentives Drove Real Change." Drive Electric Vermont, accessed September 13, 2026. <https://www.driveelectricvt.com/blog/how-vermonts-clean-transportation-incentives-drove-real-change>.

⁵ Drive Electric Vermont. "How Vermont's Clean Transportation Incentives Drove Real Change." Drive Electric Vermont, accessed September 13, 2026. <https://www.driveelectricvt.com/blog/how-vermonts-clean-transportation-incentives-drove-real-change>.

Key audiences are segmented and categorized into three categories: current covered vehicles and operational actors, future MBUF covered vehicles, and public acceptance influencers.

2.5.1 Current Covered Vehicles and Operational Actors

Current covered vehicles and operational actors include:

- Current BEV owners and lessees
- DMV employees
- Dealerships
- Inspection stations
- Vermont Vehicle and Automotive Distributors Association and Drive Electric Vermont

Together, these groups will be focused on understanding the actions they need to take and when. **Table 2** describes these groups' anticipated questions and messaging.

Table 2: Current Covered Vehicles and Operational Actors—Anticipated Questions and Messaging

Audience Segment	Anticipated Questions	Message Focus
BEV owners and lessees	• Will an MBUF reduce the financial advantage of owning a more fuel-efficient vehicle? • How will the program work? • What are the requirements? • How will the program impact constituents? • Can a transition from a flat fee approach to an MBUF undermine environmental goals? • Will the new program be challenging, cost-prohibitive, or overly complicated?	• Even with an MBUF, drivers still save money by switching to EVs or fuel-efficient vehicles due to fuel cost savings • Reaching Vermont's climate targets will require sustainable road funding. • The MBUF program has been designed to be straightforward, intuitive, and privacy focused. • AOT has developed materials and events to support drivers and operators.
• DMV employees, inspection stations, and dealerships • Vermont Vehicle and Automotive Distributors Association and Drive Electric Vermont	• How will the program work? • What are the requirements for customers and operational actors? • How will the program impact constituents?	• Drivers still save money by switching to EVs or fuel-efficient vehicles due to fuel cost savings • Reaching Vermont's climate targets can go hand-in-hand with sustainable road funding. • AOT is collaborating with partners to develop clear expectations, roles, and responsibilities.

Audience Segment	Anticipated Questions	Message Focus
		• AOT is developing materials and events to support drivers and operators.

2.5.2 Future Covered Vehicles

Future covered vehicles include plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) and other hybrid vehicles that will join the list of covered vehicles beginning in 2029. Receiving more focused engagement in 2028, this group will be focused on understanding program milestones and requirements as they apply to PHEVs and hybrids. **Table 3** describes these groups' anticipated questions and messaging.

Table 3: Future Covered Vehicles—Anticipated Questions and Messaging

Audience Segment	Anticipated Questions	Message Focus
Owners of PHEVs that could join the list of covered vehicles in 2029	• Will an MBUF reduce the financial advantage of owning a more fuel-efficient vehicle? • Can the transition from a flat fee approach to an MBUF undermine environmental goals? • Will the new program be challenging, cost-prohibitive, or overly complicated?	• Even with an MBUF, drivers still save money by switching to EVs/fuel-efficient vehicles due to fuel cost savings • Reaching Vermont's climate targets can go hand-in-hand with sustainable road funding. • The MBUF program has been designed to be straightforward, intuitive, and privacy focused. • AOT has developed materials and events to support drivers and operators.

2.5.3 Public Acceptance Influencers

Public acceptance influencers are individuals and groups with the potential to influence public opinion and program acceptance. These include:

- General public, including demographic subsets like rural residents, prospective BEV or PHEV buyers, Vermonters in households with lower incomes, privacy-concerned residents, the less technologically proficient, or people with environmental concerns
- State legislators

- Media
- Advocacy groups, local elected officials, and community leaders

Most members of this audience will focus on understanding why the MBUF program exists and how it will impact them and their fellow Vermonters. While many audience members will be satisfied with high-level explanations, some will want more details and data about MBUF's potential impacts for transportation funding and households. **Table 4** describes these groups' anticipated questions and messaging.

Table 4: Public Acceptance Influencers—Anticipated Questions and Messaging

Audience Segment	Anticipated Questions	Message Focus
General public	Will an MBUF: • Be costly and burdensome for individuals or households? • Penalize people who must drive long distances for work, services, healthcare, and shopping? • Increase household transportation costs and disproportionately affect financially vulnerable residents? • Prevent the government or vendors from monitoring travel behavior or collecting excessive personal information? • Bring complicated technology requirements, administrative burden, or enrollment complexity?	• Vermont-specific MBUF analyses have shown: ○ minimal differences for annual MBUF paid compared to annual fuel tax paid for most vehicles. ○ rural households would generally experience smaller cost increases than urban households. ○ lower-income households generally face smaller increases than higher-income households. • All Vermonters receive the benefit of a well-funded multimodal transportation system: strong roads, robust EV charging networks, and funded transit systems. • Even with an MBUF, drivers still save money by switching to EVs/fuel-efficient vehicles due to fuel cost savings. • The MBUF program has been designed to be straightforward, intuitive, and privacy focused.

Audience Segment	Anticipated Questions	Message Focus
• State legislators • Media • Advocacy groups, local elected officials, and community leaders	• How does the public feel about this program? • How will the program impact constituents, transportation funding, and climate goals?	• Even with an MBUF, drivers still save money by switching to EVs or fuel-efficient vehicles due to fuel cost savings. • Reaching Vermont's climate targets will require sustainable road funding. • The Vermont MBUF program has been designed to be straightforward, intuitive, and privacy focused. • AOT has developed materials and events to support drivers and operators.

2.6 MBUF Program Customer Journey and Operational Actor Support

The Vermont MBUF program creates different experiences for customers and operational actors. While covered vehicle owners and lessees interact directly with the program, operational actors such as DMV staff, inspection stations, and dealerships play an important role in supporting awareness, understanding, compliance, and customer confidence. Understanding these journeys helps identify audience-specific communications, training, and engagement activities. Section 2.6 builds on these insights through an audience communications matrix and a broader set of communications methods and tactics.

VTrans serves as the executive sponsor of the MBUF program. The Agency of Transportation (AOT) encompasses both VTrans and DMV, each of which has a direct role in program implementation and communications. VTrans will support program leadership, public awareness, broader transportation funding communications, and feedback activities, while DMV will lead customer-facing operational activities associated with vehicle registration, mileage reporting, assessments, payment, and customer service. Supporting a successful customer journey will also require collaboration with the AOT Director of Communications and Public Outreach and other operational and technical partners, including the DMV system vendor (FAST) and the Agency of Digital Services (ADS), which is overseeing the technical implementation.

2.6.1 Customer Journey Overview

The customer journey provides a customer-centered framework for communications planning. Rather than focusing on individual communication tactics, the journey highlights what customers may be trying to accomplish at different points in the program, what questions they may have, and where communications, training, and support resources may be most helpful. The journey can also provide a foundation for

identifying operational dependencies, customer touchpoints, and opportunities for continuous improvement.

The MBUF customer journey is organized into six stages:

1. Building awareness
2. Increasing understanding
3. Preparing for compliance
4. Providing a payment option
5. Conducting ongoing reporting
6. Obtaining feedback

Figure 2 illustrates these stages and how they relate to the broader customer experience. The figure highlights the roles of VTrans, DMV, and other operational actors throughout the customer journey, including dealerships and inspection stations that actively engage with customers about the MBUF program, and provide general support or program materials.

Figure 2: Covered Vehicle Customer Journey



While all audiences may benefit from awareness and understanding activities, only covered vehicle owners and lessees experience the full journey from compliance preparation through reporting, participation, and payment. Future participants, policymakers, stakeholder organizations, and the broader public interact with different portions of the journey depending on their relationship to the program.

2.6.2 Operational Actor Roles

Operational actors play an important supporting role throughout the customer journey. As they often interact with customers before, during, and after key program activities,

they may influence customer awareness, understanding, confidence, and participation. Understanding these roles helps identify operational touchpoints where communications, information sharing, and customer support activities may reinforce the broader communications strategy. Within AOT, VTrans and DMV have distinct but complementary operational and communications roles. Table 5 describes their roles, along with those of other operational actors, and identifies associated communication needs.

Table 5: Operational Actor Roles

Operational Actor	Role in the Journey	Communications
VTrans	Executive sponsorship, transportation funding context, public awareness, stakeholder coordination, and program feedback	Requires ongoing coordination with DMV and communications partners to maintain consistent program messages, respond to stakeholder questions, and incorporate feedback into program communications.
DMV	Registration, renewal, customer support interactions	Requires timely information regarding program requirements, customer responsibilities, common questions, and policy updates.
Inspection Stations	Key mileage-reporting touchpoint and recurring customer interaction	Requires awareness of reporting requirements, customer questions, and referral pathways for additional support.
Vehicle Dealerships	Early point of contact for prospective BEV owners and lessees	Requires foundational information about program purpose, applicability, and available customer resources.
FAST / ADS	Supports systems, workflows, and customer-facing processes	Requires ongoing coordination with communications staff to support accurate and timely customer information.

2.6.3 Journey for Other Audiences

Not all audiences experience the MBUF program in the same way. While covered vehicle owners and lessees experience the full journey from awareness and understanding through compliance, participation, and payment, other audiences interact with only portions of the journey based on their relationship to the program. Understanding these differences helps identify the types of information audiences may need and when that information may be most relevant:

- **Current and prospective BEV owners and lessees** experience the full customer journey, from awareness and understanding through compliance preparation, participation, payment, and feedback.

- **Operational actors** interact primarily with the awareness, understanding, compliance readiness, customer support, and feedback portions of the journey as they support customers before, during, and after key program activities.
- **Future participants**, such as PHEV owners and lessees, are primarily connected to awareness, understanding, future readiness, and feedback activities while they remain outside the initial program scope.
- **Public acceptance influencers**, including legislators, community leaders, advocacy organizations, and media representatives, are most closely associated with awareness, understanding, and feedback opportunities that help shape broader public understanding of the program.
- **The broader Vermont public** primarily engages with the awareness and understanding portions of the journey, helping build understanding of Vermont's transportation funding challenges and the role of MBUF in addressing those challenges.

This assessment of audience interactions at different stages of the customer journey helps inform the communications approach described in Section 2.6.

3.0 Communications Strategy Implementation

3.1 Laying the Foundation

Best practices from national MBUF implementation efforts have reinforced the importance of conducting early user-centered research to inform engagement messaging and methods. Understanding this, AOT will conduct a statewide survey, interviews with stakeholder groups, and focus groups with current covered vehicle owners and operational actors.

Early coordination with DMV, inspection program partners, FAST, and other operational actors will also be important during this phase. Customer notices, templates, portal content, and other customer-facing communications may require development, review, testing, and system integration before deployment. Aligning communications planning with operational implementation activities can help support consistent customer messaging across websites, notices, customer-service interactions, and other program touchpoints.

Statewide MBUF Survey

Nationally, statewide MBUF surveys have provided helpful information that allows programs to gauge awareness, attitudes, and concerns. Assuming consultant procurement timeframes align, Vermont's statewide survey will take place in the last quarter of 2026 and focus on current covered vehicle owners and lessees as well as members of the general public.

Recruitment will draw from the state's 14 regions to get a fuller picture of Vermonters' awareness, perceptions, concerns, and priorities related to the program, with the goal of capturing insights that will help AOT identify the factors that drive program participation. To increase response numbers, AOT will use digital ads, social media posts, and stakeholder amplification while engaging traditional local media news and ad outlets. After the survey, AOT will use findings to uncover trends across user groups and regions and to shape focus group audiences and topics.

Stakeholder Interviews

The most successful MBUF programs utilized early engagement with stakeholders like policymakers, frontline staff, and advocacy groups to understand attitudes, spread awareness, and address concerns. In Vermont, understanding what matters to stakeholder groups like AOT and DMV staff, EV and environmental advocacy groups, and local and state officials and community leaders will be essential for building early support and awareness. To schedule these meetings, AOT will leverage existing communications, including email lists, meetings, and conferences. Following these meetings, AOT will take steps to assess these groups' priorities and concerns and follow up with updates.

Focus Groups

Because focus groups provide an opportunity to have more nuanced conversations with key audience segments, states across the country have leaned on this mechanism to understand how to talk about and improve MBUF programs. Focus groups will allow



AOT to identify Vermonters' specific concerns, priorities, and insights. These conversations will allow AOT to test messages, evaluate communication materials, and explore survey findings in greater depth.

Findings from these focus groups will help inform how, when, and where to share program messages, the efficacy of engagement efforts, and ongoing program improvements.

User Testing

MBUF programs have used user testing to test messages, understand user behavior, and refine customer journeys. Similarly, AOT will use interactive tools like MBUF estimators and simulators to identify effective messaging and tweak program collateral, communication cadence, and design.

3.2 Engagement Methods

A strong communication strategy draws from a variety of methods to achieve program goals.

Program Website

An online home for the MBUF program will be key to raising awareness and reinforcing legitimacy. Digital ads, press releases, and email list distributions will help drive visits to the Program website. Key website content will include:

- Transportation funding overview, including challenges, current funding streams, and how MBUF provides a sustainable solution
- Details about Vermont's MBUF program, including when it begins, who is included, and when and how to pay the first MBUF bill
- MBUF estimator to understand what an MBUF looks like for households and individuals
- Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

Email Newsletters

By leveraging AOT's existing stakeholder email lists, AOT can build on the goodwill the agency has already accumulated through consistent engagement. Additionally, emails to registered BEV owners and lessees will allow AOT to reach potential customers via a familiar platform.

Multimedia Engagement

Engaging members of local traditional and digital media will help accelerate awareness of the MBUF program while helping provide drivers with program information. Engagement will leverage press releases, story pitching, op-eds from trusted stakeholders, and engagement collateral like the program website and video. A press release can be distributed to all Vermont publications using a media wire service, and additional engagement can be undertaken via outlets with statewide reach, or significant reach in counties with high rates of BEV ownership.

High-impact outlets that may potentially be engaged are listed below; where available, recent information about readership and engagement is included.

- *Addison County Independent*, a news source reaching more than 30,000 Vermonters weekly through its website, e-newsletter, and weekly print publication⁶
- *Barre-Montpelier Times Argus* a print and online news source serving the Barre and Montpelier communities
- *Brattleboro Reformer*, a print and online news source serving the Brattleboro community
- *Burlington Free Press*, daily print and online news source based in Burlington
- Drive Electric Vermont, a public-private partnership organization and AOT partner that works to increase EV adoption and access in Vermont, and that produces online articles and an e-newsletter
- *My NBC5*, a local NBC affiliate serving Burlington, Vermont and Plattsburgh, New York
- *Rutland Herald*, a print and online news source in Rutland
- *Seven Days*, a free independent weekly distributed in Northern and Central Vermont, with a weekly print readership of 91,000, digital readership of more than 87,000, and nearly 34,000 e-newsletter subscribers.⁷
- *Shelburne News*, a Shelburne-based print and online news source with a circulation of 4,200.
- *Stowe Reporter*, a Stowe-based print and online news source with a circulation of 2,500.

⁶ Addison Independent. "Advertise with the Addison Independent." Addison Independent. Accessed September 13, 2026. <https://www.addisonindependent.com/advertise-with-the-addison-independent/>.

⁷ Seven Days. Seven Days Media Kit: Digital and Print Advertising Options for Vermont's Largest Independent Weekly Newspaper. Accessed September 13, 2026. <https://sales.sevendaysvt.com/>.

- The *Colchester Sun*, the *Essex Reporter*, and the *Milton Independent*, which are owned by the same parent company and provide coverage to Chittenden County communities. Combined with another northern Vermont news source, the *St. Albans Messenger*, these sources have 458,000 monthly digital views and a monthly print readership of more than 80,700.⁸
- *Valley News*, a West Lebanon, New Hampshire-based print and online news source serving eastern Vermont and western New Hampshire
- *Vermont Public*, Vermont's independent public television and radio source with approximately 295,000 online visitors; 385,000 television and streaming viewers; and 537,000 radio and audio streaming listeners monthly.⁹
- *VTDigger*, an online nonprofit news source with 500,000 monthly readers and 45,000 e-newsletter subscribers.¹⁰
- *Waterbury Roundabout*, an online news source serving the Waterbury community, with 45,000 unique monthly visitors and an average of 7,200 home page views monthly¹¹
- WCAX, a South Burlington-based CBS affiliate serving Vermont, New York, and New Hampshire.

Videos

Short, 30-second and 15-second videos will provide program info in digestible formats well-suited for digital engagement. Videos can also be played in physical locations, like DMV waiting areas or gas station screens, to increase awareness.

⁸ O'Rourke Media Group. "Local Advertising VT - Digital Marketing." O'Rourke Media Group. Accessed September 13, 2026. <https://orourkemediagroup.com/advertise-with-us-vt/>.

⁹ Galloway, Anne. "Vermont Public Navigates a Future Without Subsidies." *Seven Days*, February 25, 2026. <https://www.sevendaysvt.com/news/media-news/vermont-public-navigates-future-without-subsidies/>.

¹⁰ VTDigger. "Advertise." VTDigger. Accessed September 13, 2026. <https://vtdigger.org/advertise/>.

¹¹ Waterbury Roundabout. "Advertising." *Waterbury Roundabout*. Accessed September 13, 2026. <https://www.waterburyroundabout.org/advertising>.

Events and Briefings

Community events will allow AOT to literally meet Vermonters where they are. Presence at high-impact community gathering areas—like community centers, special events, libraries, and town meetings—as well as virtual and in-person briefings with key audiences can help broaden the engagement reach.

Paid Print, Broadcast, and Digital Ads

By leveraging paid print, digital, and broadcast ads, AOT can extend its message to more Vermonters while also focusing targeted messages with specific audiences who engage with advertisements in the news outlets mentioned earlier. Additionally, as many Vermonters listen to the radio during their commutes and in their homes and offices, radio and smart speaker ads will be used to help amplify messaging.

AOT Social Media Following

X
2,619

Facebook
62,000

YouTube
972

Instagram
3,137

DMV Social Media Following

X
3,624

Facebook
21,000

YouTube
176

Instagram
1,493

Social Media

Social media posts will help the Vermont MBUF program leverage AOT and DMV's combined 94,000-plus followers and subscribers. Unpaid social media posts will get vital content in front of active followers, while paid social media ads and boosted posts extend engagement. This impact can be multiplied by partnering with local AOT and DMV office social media accounts to share program updates and requirements.

Printed and Digital Materials

As seen in Hawai'i's MBUF rollout, using a combination of printed and digital materials—like postcards, fact sheets, and how-to guides—is vital to informing prospective users, raising general awareness, addressing public concerns, and reducing customer service inquiries. The Vermont communication strategy will leverage printed mailers to inform the state's current BEV owners and lessees of the program milestones and support. Additionally, factsheets, signage, and other collateral can be distributed via DMV registration renewal notices, DMV offices, dealerships, inspection stations, community gathering areas, advocacy groups' e-newsletters, and via the Front Porch Forum platform.

Training

With the shift to a new program, AOT and DMV staff, inspection stations, and dealers will need information about program milestones, key changes for them, and where to

send customers with questions. Trainings provide this important information for frontline staff responsible for operationalizing the MBUF program.

3.2.1 Accessibility Considerations

Accessibility considerations will inform how the Vermont MBUF program communicates with BEV owners and lessees, as well as with non-EV drivers. Though nearly 90% of Vermont households have a broadband internet subscription, a portion do not.¹² To address these varied household contexts, the plan includes a mixture of digital and printed materials.

Meeting Vermonters where they are is an important hallmark of this communication strategy. To make materials more accessible, materials will:

- Use plain language and straightforward explanations
- Have 508-compliant graphics and text
- Be available in multiple languages when communications target audience members with limited English proficiency and as recommended by AOT's Director of Communications and Public Outreach.

3.3 Proposed Schedule

AOT will organize engagement activities into three phases, as described in Figure 3.

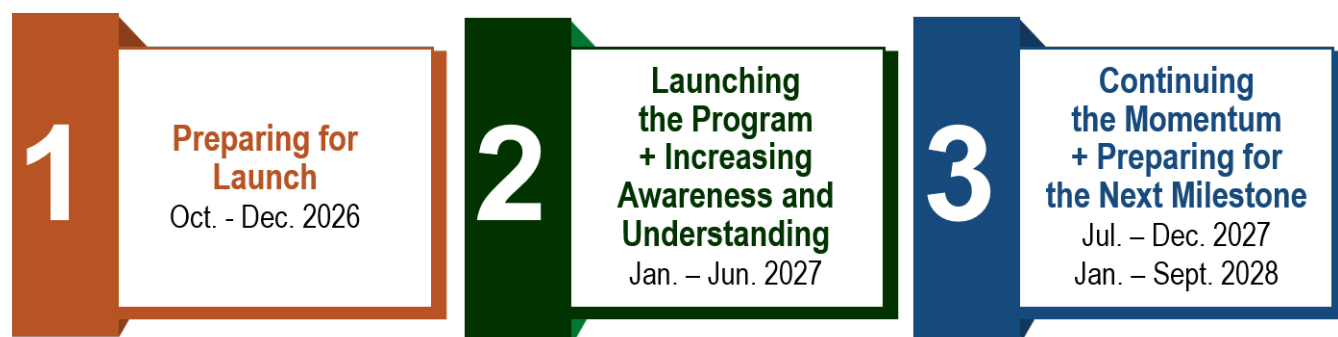


Figure 3: Proposed Communication Phases

The following sections describe these phases in detail.

3.3.1 Phase 1: Preparing for Launch

This research- and engagement-forward phase will use data gathering methods to understand driver attitudes, concerns, knowledge gaps, and preferred messaging around MBUF in general and Vermont's program in particular.

¹² U.S. Census Bureau. "QuickFacts: Vermont." U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts. Accessed August 31, 2026. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/VT/PST045225>.

Following research, the phase will continue with a focus on:

- Raising awareness among BEV drivers, interest groups, and inspection stations about Vermont’s MBUF program
- Articulating clear roles, responsibilities, expectations, and communication channels for operational actors
- Supporting DMV as the key operational actor who will distribute information and training resources to dealerships, the Vermont Vehicle and Automotive Distributors Association, inspection stations, and Drive Electric Vermont
- Addressing program misconceptions and increasing BEV drivers’ understanding, participation, and positive opinions of the program before launch
- Preparing covered vehicle owners and lessees for MBUF program milestones and compliance

Table 6 describes Phase 1 target audiences and associated activities in greater detail.

Table 6: Phase 1 Target Audiences and Activities

Audience	Activities
BEV owners and lessees	• Conduct focus groups. • Stand up program website and MBUF estimator. • Distribute printed mailers and other materials. • Contact via email lists. • Distribute explanatory video: “What happens at your next inspection”. • Conduct targeted digital ads.
DMV employees, inspection stations, and dealerships	• Collaboratively develop roles and responsibilities for distribution. • Establish communication channel to respond to questions. • Conduct focus groups. • Host virtual training events to: ○ Present information on program details and milestones. ○ Offer recommendations for customer conversations. ○ Answer questions. ○ Provide shareable materials with relevant details.

Audience	Activities
Vermont Vehicle and Automotive Distributors Association, and Drive Electric Vermont	• Conduct interviews. • Provide information on communicating changes to customers and constituents. • Host virtual event to: ○ Present information on program details and milestones. ○ Offer recommendations for customer conversations. ○ Answer questions. ○ Provide shareable materials with relevant details.
State legislators and local elected officials	• Conduct 1x1 briefings with key state legislators. • Engage key local elected officials. • Follow up with a fact sheet containing program details and milestones.
Civic leaders, local officials, and community advocates	• Provide program overview fact sheet. • Host virtual event to: ○ Present information on program details and milestones. ○ Offer recommendations for customer conversations. ○ Answer questions. ○ Provide shareable materials with relevant details ○ Invite to share program info with audiences. • Send information through email lists, including shareable content.
General public, including: • Rural Vermonters and high-mileage drivers • Low-income households • Privacy-sensitive Vermonters • Less technology-proficient Vermonters	• Conduct statewide survey.

3.3.2 Phase 2: Launching the Program and Increasing Awareness and Understanding

Once the Vermont MBUF program launches on January 1, 2027, the strategy will continue to work on increasing BEV drivers' understanding, participation, and positive opinions of the program. This sustained engagement to all audience tiers will be vital to building longer-term understanding and acceptance among Vermont drivers, with an eye toward building long-term public acceptance and positive opinions of the MBUF program.

Table 7 describes Phase 2 target audiences and associated activities in greater detail.

Table 7: Phase 2 Target Audiences and Activities

Audience	Activities
BEV owners and lessees	• Maintain and update program website. • Conduct ad and social media campaign to drive website visits and inspection appointments. • Distribute explanatory video: “What happens at your next inspection”. • Drive traffic to MBUF estimator using ads. • Communicate updates, including enrollment, via email lists.
Media	• Release press release. • Pitch stories. • Monitor coverage. • Pitch op-eds.
DMV employees, inspection stations, and dealerships	• Monitor questions and feedback via a dedicated email inbox. • Update quarterly via a newsletter.
• Vermont Vehicle and Automotive Distributors Association • Drive Electric Vermont • State legislators • Media	• Monitor questions and feedback via a dedicated email inbox. • Update quarterly via a newsletter.
Civic leaders, local officials, and community advocates	• Host virtual info session and Q&A events. • Send updates through email lists.
General public, including: • Rural Vermonters and high-mileage drivers • Low-income households • Privacy-sensitive Vermonters • Less technology-proficient Vermonters	• Drive traffic to program website, MBUF estimator, video, and FAQs using ads, social media, and influencer content. • Use subject-specific social media posts to share information and address common questions. • Engage via media stories. • Engage via in-person and virtual events. • Share fact sheet via community and DMV locations focused on MBUF and household income via libraries and other community areas. • Engage via subject-specific social media posts.

3.3.3 Phase 3: Continuing the Momentum and Preparing for the Next Milestone

Once the Vermont MBUF program moves beyond the initial launch period, the strategy will continue to support customer understanding, program participation, and long-term acceptance through sustained engagement. In this phase, communications will focus on helping eligible drivers understand first payment steps, maintaining clear and accessible program information, addressing audience-specific concerns, and continuing to gather customer and public feedback through focus groups and community engagement.

Ongoing outreach through the website, email lists, digital ads, social media, media engagement, and in-person materials will be important to reinforcing program awareness, supporting a positive customer experience, and building longer-term confidence in the MBUF program among Vermont drivers. Toward the end of this phase, the strategy will engage PHEV and hybrid owners and lessees to help them prepare for future milestones and requirements.

Table 8 describes Phase 3 target audiences and associated activities in greater detail.

Table 8: Phase 3 Target Audiences and Activities

Audience	Activity
BEV owners and lessees	• Maintain and update program website. • Conduct ad and social media campaign to raise awareness about first MBUF payment steps. • Send printed mailers with step-by-step instructions. • Distribute explanatory video: “Paying your first MBUF”. • Conduct focus groups to gauge engagement effectiveness and future needs. • Drive traffic to MBUF estimator. • Communicate updates via email lists.
DMV employees, inspection stations, and dealerships	• Monitor questions and feedback via a dedicated email inbox. • Conduct focus groups to understand current needs and priorities. • Update quarterly via a newsletter. • Host virtual info session.
• Vermont Vehicle and Automotive Distributors Association • Drive Electric Vermont • State legislators • Media	• Monitor questions and feedback via a dedicated email inbox. • Update quarterly via a newsletter.
Civic leaders, local officials, and community advocates	• Host virtual info session and Q&A events. • Send updates through email lists.
Media	• Pitch stories about first MBUF payments and program updates. • Send press release about first MBUF payments and program updates. • Pitch stories about MBUF focus groups and program updates.

Audience	Activity
General public, including: • Rural Vermonters and high-mileage drivers • Low-income households • Privacy-sensitive Vermonters • Less technology-proficient Vermonters	• Engage via social media posts and media stories about first payments. • Drive traffic to program website, MBUF estimator, video, and FAQs using ads, social media, and influencer content. • Engage via media coverage. • Distribute explanatory video: “What happens at your next inspection”.
PHEV and hybrid vehicle owners and lessees	• Conduct focus groups. • Send printed mailers. • Contact via email lists. • Distribute explanatory video: “What happens at your next inspection”. • Conduct targeted ads.

3.4 Performance Measurement and Metrics

Metrics will enable AOT to identify what works and determine how to adapt. AOT will monitor the metrics described in **Table 9** throughout the engagement phases to measure progress toward goals and objectives and allow for data-informed decision making.

Table 9: Goals, Objectives, and Associated Performance Metrics

Goals and Objectives	Metrics
Build broad awareness. Build awareness of: • Vermont's transportation funding challenges • The purpose of the MBUF program • How sustainable transportation funding supports Vermont's roads, bridges, transit, rail, and other transportation investments.	• Positive to neutral coverage in local and state news • Social media views • Program website visits • Conversion rate (clicks to website visits) for ads, social media posts, and videos • Positive survey and focus group feedback • Survey completions • Successful recruitment of focus group and user testing participants
Increase understanding. Increase understanding of: • MBUF program requirements • Available payment options • Key dates, customer responsibilities, and the implications of compliance and non-compliance.	• Customer service surveys • MBUF estimator completions

Goals and Objectives	Metrics
Prepare covered vehicle owners for MBUF program milestones and compliance. • Prepare BEV owners and lessees to successfully comply with mileage reporting requirements beginning January 1, 2027 by providing information about: ○ Requirements that begin on January 1, 2027, 2028, and 2029 ○ Available payment options ○ Key dates, customer responsibilities, and the implications of compliance and non-compliance. • Drive utilization of and payment on myDMV.com	• Year-over-year growth in the rate of BEV owners and lessees who complete their odometer readings on time • Number and/or rate of BEV vehicles making their first MBUF payment • Customer service surveys • Customer service inquiries • myDMV registration and utilization metrics, as available
Support customer confidence and successful participation. Provide transparent, accessible, and customer-focused communications that help participants understand mileage reporting, billing, payment, customer support resources, and available options.	• Customer service surveys • Customer service inquiries • Positive focus group feedback
Build readiness for future program expansion. Create awareness among Vermonters to support future program evolution, including potential expansion to PHEVs and additional mileage reporting options.	• Positive to neutral coverage in local and state news • Social media views • Program website visits • MBUF estimator completions • Conversion rate (clicks to website visits) for ads, social media posts, and videos • Positive survey and focus group feedback • Year-over-year growth in the rate of PHEV owners and lessees who complete their odometer readings on time
Gather feedback and improve customer experience. Use focused engagement and user-centered tools to inform messaging, implementation, and future program and policy decisions.	• Survey completions • Positive-to-neutral group feedback

3.5 Risk Mitigation and Opportunities

The Vermont MBUF program will be implemented in a dynamic environment that includes a variety of communication risks and opportunities. As the program transitions from planning to implementation, proactive communications will play an important role in supporting public understanding, building confidence, and reducing confusion.

3.5.1 Risks and Mitigation Strategies

The risks and mitigation strategies detailed in **Table 10** identify potential barriers to successful implementation and outline communication approaches that can help address concerns, improve customer experiences, and support long-term program acceptance among Vermont drivers and stakeholders.

Table 10: Risk and Mitigation Strategies

Risk	Mitigation Strategies
Public skepticism about program legitimacy or readiness at launch	• Launch communications and customer education resources before program implementation. • Use a centralized website as the authoritative source of information. • Demonstrate program readiness through clear instructions, support resources, and transparent implementation information.
Low public awareness of transportation funding challenges and MBUF concepts	• Begin communications by explaining the transportation funding challenge before discussing program mechanics. • Use simple, plain-language educational materials that explain why the fuel tax is becoming less effective. • Maintain sustained outreach before, during, and after launch rather than relying on a single awareness campaign.
Public or stakeholder resistance	• Use educational content, including FAQs, videos, fact sheets, and community presentations to address common concerns. • Share Vermont-specific research and examples that show expected impacts. • Measure awareness and understanding through surveys and focus groups and adjust messaging as appropriate. • Conduct ongoing briefings and listening sessions with community organizations, local officials, advocacy groups, and stakeholder organizations. • Share research findings and implementation updates regularly. • Use stakeholders as trusted information multipliers.
Public concerns that MBUF is unfair to rural drivers, people who drive long distances, low-income households, or people who drive out of state, particularly a state with an EV charging station fee	• Include affordability messaging supported by Vermont analyses on urban households, high-volume drivers, and low-income households. • Develop FAQs and customer-facing materials that explain how MBUF assessments are calculated and address common questions about mileage driven outside Vermont and other transportation-related

Risk	Mitigation Strategies
	charges that customers may encounter when traveling in other states. • Create audience-specific content. • Provide an MBUF estimator that generates personalized cost information. • Use localized data and examples to illustrate impacts.
Perception that MBUF is a new fee added to the EV infrastructure fee for BEVs, rather than an alternative to the fee	• Consistently explain that MBUF replaces the current EV infrastructure fee for eligible vehicles (BEVs), rather than being charged in addition to it. • Emphasize fairness and the user-pay principle. • Clearly explain how MBUF relates to existing transportation funding mechanisms.
Privacy concerns regarding mileage collection	• Clearly communicate that Vermont's program relies on odometer reporting rather than location sharing. • Develop privacy-focused FAQs, fact sheets, and website content. • Repeatedly explain what data are collected and, more importantly, what data are not collected.
Confusion about the program, enrollment, payment, inspections, and customer responsibilities	• Conduct user testing before launch to identify points of confusion. Develop step-by-step instructions, explainer videos, customer journey maps, and FAQs. • Use multiple channels to inform, including print and digital channels. • Provide customer support scripts. • Provide an MBUF estimator that generates personalized cost information. • Emphasize real-world examples rather than abstract policy discussions.
Messages fail to resonate with specific audiences	• Segment communications by audience instead of using broad, generic messaging. • Tailor information for EV owners, rural drivers, low-income households, privacy-sensitive drivers, less technology-proficient residents, and local leaders. • Conduct user testing to identify the most effective themes.
Negative media coverage or misinformation	• Build relationships with media before launch through briefings and media kits. • Provide fact sheets, localized data, spokespeople, and rapid-response materials. • Monitor public sentiment and proactively address emerging misconceptions.
Insufficient feedback to identify implementation problems early	• Use surveys, focus groups, interviews, website analytics, and user testing throughout implementation.

Risk	Mitigation Strategies
	• Establish feedback loops that allow program materials and messaging to be adjusted in response to customer needs. • Continue research after launch, not just before implementation.
Loss of institutional knowledge due to staff, leadership, or stakeholder turnover	• Create evergreen educational resources and briefing materials. • Maintain stakeholder databases and orientation materials. • Periodically refresh outreach to policymakers, agency staff, and stakeholder organizations.
Inconsistent messaging	• Create and utilize a program style guide with information on branding, logo use, colors, key terminology, and writing style; distribute the style guide to communication partners, including AOT staff, DMV staff, contractors, and other parties. • Review outgoing communications for consistency and alignment with the program style guide.

3.6 Opportunities

Vermont begins implementation with an existing foundation that it can leverage for successful engagement and operational staff and customer preparation:

- **Prior investment in MBUF research and engagement.** During the 2021–2022 Vermont Electric and Highly Fuel-Efficient Vehicle Road Usage Charge Study, AOT conducted targeted outreach and convened an advisory committee consisting of transportation users and operators. As a result, some key Vermont audiences already have a foundational understanding of transportation funding and MBUF concepts, creating a starting point for future engagement and education efforts. However, communications should not assume that this understanding is current, broadly distributed, or shared by members of the public.
- **Existing communication infrastructure, relationships, and delivery channels.** AOT routinely communicates with residents through a variety of channels, existing communication infrastructure, and driver relationships. Vermont also benefits from established communications infrastructure, media contracts, stakeholder relationships, and customer communications channels managed through AOT and DMV. These resources, relationships, and institutional knowledge can be leveraged to support the MBUF communications strategy.
- **Direct implementation experience.** Recent experience implementing vehicle-related fees reinforced the importance of supporting implementation through

communications, outreach, and customer education efforts. This lays valuable groundwork for MBUF deployment by highlighting the importance of preparing Vermonters using clear, consistent, and proactive communications that build awareness, reduce uncertainty, and minimize surprises.

- **Existing customer and operational touchpoints.** Registration, renewal, annual safety inspections, vehicle purchases, customer-service interactions, and stakeholder networks provide opportunities to deliver information through activities Vermonters already undertake. Vehicle dealerships represent an important customer-facing touchpoint for the MBUF program.¹³ As a result, they play an important role in helping current and prospective BEV owners understand the purpose of the program, anticipated requirements, available resources, and where to obtain additional information. These operational touchpoints can help the State reach people where they are (in person) rather than relying solely on customers to seek out MBUF information independently. Early engagement and training for DMV, inspection stations, and dealership personnel may therefore support broader customer awareness and readiness.

These existing investments and touchpoints provide Vermont with a strong starting point for communications and engagement. At the same time, public awareness of transportation funding challenges may vary, and many vehicle owners may be unfamiliar with MBUF. While stakeholders involved in earlier studies and legislative discussions may possess some prior knowledge, turnover among legislators, agency staff, stakeholder representatives, and organizational leadership may affect continuity of knowledge. Also, levels of support for MBUF concepts may vary among operational actors (DMV, Inspection stations, and dealerships) and require a customized engagement approach.

MBUF implementation therefore presents communications challenges that differ from many traditional transportation initiatives. Clear and coordinated messaging will be essential to help customers understand program rationale and what actions, if any, they need to take. The program also creates an opportunity to establish feedback mechanisms to better understand customer experiences, identify implementation challenges, and inform future refinements.

¹³ According to AOT discussions with program stakeholders, 90 percent of new vehicle transactions occur through dealerships, including many used vehicle purchases.

Appendix A. Alignment with MBUF Communications Best Practices

The Vermont MBUF Communications Strategy draws on findings from a review of MBUF research, communications, and implementation efforts in Oregon, Utah, Virginia, Hawai'i, and regional initiatives led by The Eastern Transportation Coalition (TETC).

Table A-1 summarizes selected findings from the Best Practices Review, identifies where they were observed, and describes how they are reflected in Vermont's recommended communications approach.

Table A-11: Alignment with MBUF Communications Best Practices

Finding from Best Practices Review	Observed in	Application in Vermont's Communications Strategy
Establish the transportation funding context before focusing on program requirements. Communications can first explain why the current funding approach needs to evolve before describing how MBUF works.	Oregon and TETC. Oregon communications linked MBUF to declining fuel-tax revenues and sustainable transportation funding. TETC found that audiences were more receptive when communications first established the need for a sustainable transportation funding source.	Vermont's communications goals and topline messaging explain the transportation funding challenge and rationale for MBUF before introducing customer actions and program requirements.
Use clear, concise, and relatable messages to make MBUF easier to understand. Tested messages can translate abstract rates and funding concepts into information customers can readily apply.	Virginia and Hawai'i. Virginia used concise cost-focused messaging, while Hawai'i's message testing supported expressing the rate as "\$8 per 1,000 miles driven" rather than as a fraction of a cent per mile.	Vermont's strategy establishes a limited set of recurring message themes focused on transportation funding, fairness, environmental and mobility goals, customer choice, simplicity, transparency, and privacy.
Use research and message testing to inform communications and customer experience. Surveys, interviews, focus groups, participant feedback, and testing can help identify concerns and validate messaging before and after implementation.	Oregon, Utah, Virginia, Hawai'i, and TETC. The reviewed programs used combinations of statewide surveys, listening sessions, focus groups, customer research, digital message testing, demonstrations, simulations, and participant feedback.	Vermont's implementation approach includes a statewide survey, stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and user testing to inform messages, materials, communications sequencing, and future refinements.
Tailor communications to defined audiences and local circumstances. Broad messages can remain consistent while supporting information, examples, and methods reflect different audience needs.	Oregon, Virginia, Hawai'i, and TETC. Virginia tested themes with specific groups, Hawai'i concentrated initial communications on current and prospective EV drivers, and TETC emphasized tailoring communications to state-specific conditions and data.	Vermont's audience categories, customer journeys, and audience-specific messaging distinguish among covered vehicle owners and lessees, operational actors, future participants, public acceptance influencers, and broader public audiences.

Finding from Best Practices Review	Observed in	Application in Vermont's Communications Strategy
Use practical tools and customer-facing resources to make the program tangible. Interactive tools can help customers understand potential costs, options, and personal implications.	Utah, Virginia, and TETC. Utah and Virginia developed online estimators, and TETC's Maine simulation allowed participants to enter mileage, compare options, and view personalized cost information.	Vermont's strategy includes an MBUF estimator, program website, videos, FAQs, and printed and digital materials intended to make program requirements and potential customer impacts more understandable.
Use a mix of communications, research, and customer-education channels. Different channels can support awareness, detailed education, customer action, and feedback.	Oregon, Virginia, and Hawai'i. The reviewed efforts used websites, surveys, focus groups, listening tours, videos, calculators, digital advertising, earned media, mailed materials, public briefings, and customer-facing DMV resources.	Vermont's strategy includes a program website, email, media engagement, videos, events and briefings, paid advertising, social media, printed and digital materials, training, surveys, focus groups, interviews, and user testing.
Engage customer-facing partners and key decision-makers as part of implementation communications. These audiences can support customer understanding, amplify accurate information, and provide implementation feedback.	Virginia and Hawai'i. Virginia identified automobile dealers as a secondary audience involved in explaining vehicle fees. Hawai'i briefed community organizations, EV groups, elected officials, agency leadership, and other partners before and during implementation.	Vermont's audience framework and implementation activities include DMV and AOT personnel, inspection stations, vehicle dealerships, automotive and EV organizations, legislators, local officials, advocacy organizations, and community leaders.
Address privacy concerns through clear information and program design choices. Communications can explain how mileage information is collected and respond directly to concerns about tracking and administrative complexity.	Oregon and TETC. Oregon's pilots and focus groups identified privacy and government-trust concerns, while TETC's research examined privacy, fairness, and administrative-cost concerns.	Vermont's topline messaging and risk-mitigation approaches explain the use of odometer information and emphasize simplicity, transparency, customer choice, and privacy.
Continue communications, research, and feedback activities after launch. Communications can evolve with the program and respond to emerging customer needs and implementation experience.	Utah and Virginia, with broader support in the review's overarching findings. Utah used post-launch customer-experience research to inform program and website improvements. Virginia used post-launch surveys, focus groups, and engagement to understand enrollment decisions and refine communications.	Vermont's phased strategy extends communications, engagement, customer feedback, user research, and performance measurement beyond initial implementation and through the strategy's September 2028 planning horizon.
Use feedback to refine both communications and the customer experience. Feedback	Oregon, Utah, Virginia, and Hawai'i. Oregon used participant feedback to refine program	Vermont's communications goals, customer journey, research activities, and

Finding from Best Practices Review	Observed in	Application in Vermont's Communications Strategy
can identify points of confusion, barriers to participation, and opportunities for program improvement.	design; Utah's customer research informed usability improvements; Virginia examined why eligible drivers enrolled or did not enroll; and Hawai'i used message testing and public engagement to refine its communications.	performance measures incorporate feedback collection to inform messages, materials, implementation, and future policy decisions.