



## **Study Proves Neighborhood Electric Vehicle's Value in Planned Communities**

SAN LUIS OBISPO, Calif., November 21, 2002 - Those who wonder if neighborhood electric vehicles (NEVs) really have a role in planned communities now have an answer - a resounding "yes" - courtesy of an innovative pilot project that's just come to a close in the Southern California city of Chula Vista, near San Diego.

The study data, collected and analyzed by the Green Car Institute, found nine out of 10 trips taken with neighborhood electric vehicles were ones that otherwise would have been taken by car and truck.

Green Car Institute, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational and research organization, partnered with the City of Chula Vista, the nonprofit Mobility Lab, and Global Electric Motorcars LLC (GEM), a DaimlerChrysler company, in a pilot NEV program at Heritage Village in Otay Ranch.

The largest master planned community in the state and one of the largest in the country, Otay Ranch incorporates a focus that integrates pedestrian and transit design with alternative modes of transportation. Neighborhood electric vehicles are a growing part of this focus.

"This is a perfect fit for the Green Car Institute," says Green Car Institute president Ron Cogan. "We strongly believe that alternative and clean fuel vehicles of all types have a place in our nation's transportation system. Neighborhood electric vehicles are a potentially ideal answer to short-duration, around-town transportation needs where low-speed vehicles are a good fit."

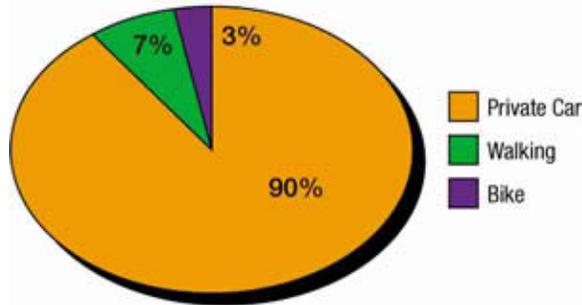
Cogan points out that one of the primary goals of the GEM pilot project at Otay Ranch was to analyze how these vehicles fit in a real-world environment, in this case as daily transportation vehicles for 28 participants who live and work within a "village" of Otay Ranch.

Over a 60 day period, most participants drove their GEMs daily, keeping track of how they used these vehicles for work and play. Of particular interest in the data collection was how these vehicles offset the use of other modes of transportation.

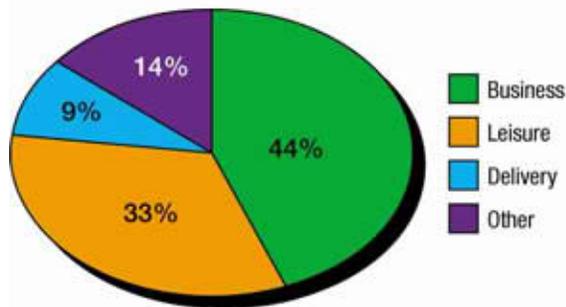
The Otay Ranch study shows that, given a choice of travel modes for short trips, participants chose a NEV over their private cars 90% of the time. Study results also showed that of the trips taken in NEVs, some 53% were for purposes defined as "business" or "delivery," meaning trips of necessity. Some 33% of the trips taken were classified as "leisure," while 14% were designated "other."

The study results are important because they quantify the value of the NEV as a viable transportation and land use tool. In fact, it appears that NEVs have the potential to help shape the way cities and communities grow by increasing individual mobility while decreasing traffic congestion and air pollution."

**Travel Mode Replaced by GEMS**



**Purpose of Trips**



The "trips of necessity" are only one part of the story. Chula Vista city planner Rich Whipple points out that "the other part of the equation is that 33% of the GEM trips were 'leisure' trips, meaning a whole lot of trips were taken just for fun."

"This program in Chula Vista has shown us on a small scale what could possibly be accomplished on a large scale, should communities embrace NEVs as an integral part of the transportation mix," adds Cogan. Additionally, he points out that the use of neighborhood electric vehicles, which emit zero localized emissions, could have a dramatic effect on cold-start emissions in areas when large numbers of these vehicles are driven.

Data generated from the Otay Ranch program, and the demonstration programs that follow it, will allow better understanding of the potential for neighborhood electric vehicles in American communities. This is especially important now when the market for NEVs is being questioned in

some quarters and championed in others. Well-documented data will help answer the question.

The Otay Ranch NEV program reinforces the development's goal of providing an environmentally sensitive and sustainable urban design, reducing traffic congestion and vehicle emissions, and showing the NEV's practical use in a modern planned community.

A key aim of the project also was to help the City of Chula Vista and the developers of Otay Ranch plan the community's transportation infrastructure from the "inside out," that is, from the user's perspective, as opposed to the standard perspective coming from professional planners or traffic engineers.

Programs like this initial one in Chula Vista show on a small scale what could possibly be accomplished on a large scale, should communities embrace NEVs as an integral part of the transportation mix.

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