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October 25, 2013, 4:31 PM

Friday Pop Quiz: Which Has More Electric Cars, Portland or Detroit?

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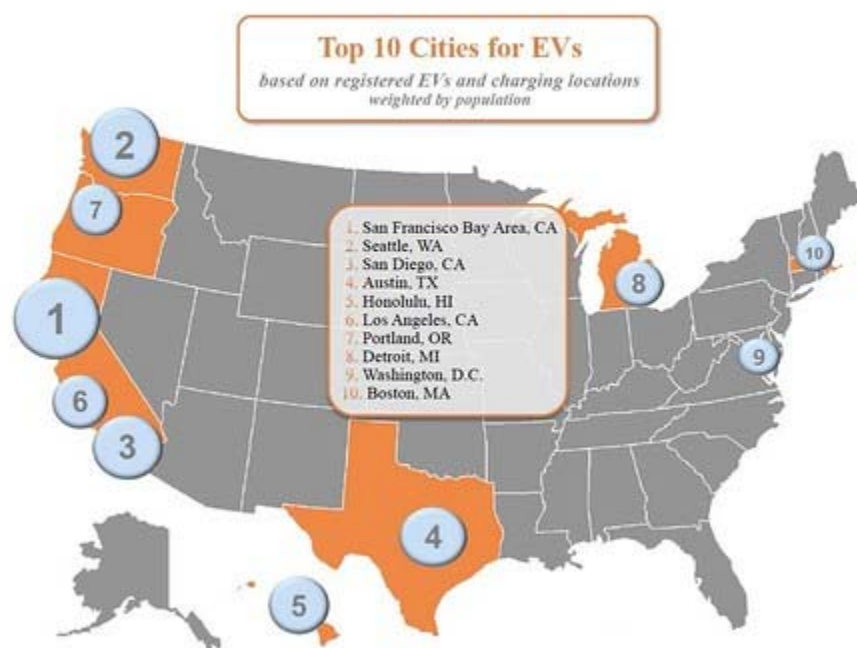
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By JOSEPH B. WHITE

Electric cars are tiny slice of the overall U.S. market, but there are certain metropolitan areas where plug-in cars are popular. ChargePoint, a company that sells electric vehicle charging stations, has rolled out a map of the top 10 electric car hotspots that contains one or two surprises.

ChargePoint says it developed its ranking of electric car-friendly metros starting with the number of registered electric vehicles, weighted those numbers according to the population for each metropolitan area and then factored in the number of public charging stations, also weighted by population.





Chargepoint

The statistical method puts the San Francisco Bay area – home to electric luxury car pioneer [Tesla Motors Inc.](#) TSLA -4.18% – in the No. 1 spot, even though Los Angeles has a larger population of registered plug-in cars (17,101 compared to San Francisco's 14,879, according to R.L. Polk & Co. data supplied by ChargePoint.)

Other cities on the list are equally unsurprising: Seattle, San Diego, Austin, Boston – all home to affluent, tech-savvy progressives. Washington, D.C., with 2,788 registered electric vehicles, comes in at No. 9, reflecting the enthusiasm for petroleum-free transportation among policy makers and clean energy advocates.

Weighing in at No. 8 is Detroit, the hometown of the fossil-fuel, legacy car business. A surprise, perhaps, given Detroit's battery-unfriendly cold weather. But Detroit is also home to General Motors Co., maker of the plug-in Chevrolet Volt, and Ford Motor Co., which makes plug-in hybrid versions of several of its models, and to thousands of automotive engineers and automotive technology suppliers who are under the gun to figure out how to make electric cars more appealing to mainstream consumers.

Bonus Question: Without adjusting for population, which city has more registered electric cars, Detroit or Portland, Ore?

Detroit: 2,989 to Portland's 1,912.

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