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Who owns the oldest car in Boston? And other questions in the city's vehicle tax database

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DAVID L RYAN/GLOBE STAFF /FILE

Customers waited at the Registry of Motor Vehicles in Watertown in 2010.

By **Matt Rocheleau**

GLOBE STAFF APRIL 08, 2015

This week, The Boston Globe data team is looking at the city's [vehicle tax database](#), which lists the value, make, year, and location of every motor vehicle in the city. Want to know what is the most expensive vehicle in Boston? Or how many new cars and other vehicles were bought last year? It's all in this data set.

Over the coming days we'll explore more of this database and plan to report our conclusions soon. We hope you will, too. Tell us what you find interesting in the data by leaving a comment here or tweeting us [@globedatadesk](#). We'll include your questions and findings in the story, too.

What to know about Boston's vehicle excise tax:

The vehicle excise tax is levied across Massachusetts on all motor vehicles and trailers registered with the state. Owners get a bill each year from the city or town where the vehicle is typically parked. Revenue from the tax stays with that local community.

The state uses a formula to calculate the bill for each vehicle. The formula factors in: the value, or "list price," of the motor vehicle, as determined by the manufacturer; how old the vehicle is, and when during the preceding year it was registered with the state. Failing to pay the tax on time – within 30 days after the annual bill is issued – can lead to extra fees and fines.

Some early findings from the data:

- The range in vehicle values is quite large. There are some valued as low as \$50, and there are what seems to be a fleet of vehicles valued at \$885,000, the highest value citywide.
- The oldest car is a 1938 Chevrolet owned by a South Boston resident. Let us know if this is you.
- There was a total of 4,100 new vehicles – or 2015 models – citywide last year.
- The most popular make of vehicle in Boston is Toyota.
- Last year, 29,405 vehicles received an excise tax bill from the city, and all those bills added up to about \$3,050,000 in taxes issued citywide.
- As of the time the data were collected, the city had collected about \$2.6 million, or about 85 percent of the money it billed vehicle owners across Boston last year.

• Also worth noting, it's not always clear what the make is for some vehicles, as some of the abbreviations used in that column are not obvious.

Download the data

Remember to tell us what you find by leaving a comment or tweeting us [@globedatadesk](#).

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