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Fleet Alternatives Study

Last fall, City staff developed a Fleet Alternatives Study Team (FAST) to look at ways to reduce fuel consumption and vehicle operating costs to minimize the financial impact of operating the City’s fleet. FAST is comprised of approximately 25 staff members from service areas throughout the organization. Working in three teams over a three month period, staff discussed a variety of options the City could consider to improve personnel and vehicle efficiencies. The three work teams had the following challenges: 1) alternative fuel vehicles and technological innovations 2) fuel efficiency and appropriate sizing of vehicles 3) vehicle operational policies and uses.

The recommendations from these teams were provided to the City’s Executive Team and implementation on many of these items is underway. These changes included an overall reduction of ten vehicles from the City’s fleet for the upcoming fiscal year. Three patrol vehicles, three detective vehicles, two parking enforcement vehicles and two vehicles from Field Operations will be sold at this year’s vehicle auction and will not be replaced. The cost of operating these ten vehicles in the current fiscal year was nearly \$105,000.

If replacement is warranted, the City will replace two bucket trucks from Field Operations with new diesel-electric hybrids later this fiscal year. The old trucks would run the engine all day to provide power to the boom for the workers to complete their tasks. The new trucks run the boom on electric power, significantly reducing fuel consumption, vehicle noise and greenhouse gas emissions on a daily basis. Based on City usage data, replacement with the diesel-hybrids anticipate over a \$30,000 savings based on the lifecycle of the two trucks. The detective fleet is also getting their first hybrid vehicle.

The system used for fuel billing of the City’s vehicles is also being modified to provide more timely information to the individual units on their fuel consumption and costs. This will allow unit managers to better track the impact of their vehicle usage choices and the volatile fuel prices on their current budget. This real time fuel charging will also avoid any need to make up excess fuel costs in future budgets. The change will go into effect July 1st.

Other efficiencies being reviewed include improving route scheduling for snow removal, solid waste collection and mowing; better utilization of motor pool vehicles; development of centralized fueling locations; development of satellite locations for vehicle storage to reduce fuel consumption and associated personnel costs related to vehicle movements. Vehicle operational policies, including idling and take home usage are also being reviewed. As we move forward, staff will be developing an improved lifecycle cost model for vehicle purchasing and create vehicle standards based on job classification and work types.

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