



County of Santa Cruz

GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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BOB WATSON, DIRECTOR

August 1, 2001

AGENDA: August 14, 2001

Board of Supervisors
COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

REPLACEMENT VEHICLE PURCHASES

Dear Members of the Board:

During the recently concluded budget hearings, your Board directed the General Services Department to report back prior to the purchase of any "non-green" vehicles with information on why those vehicles are being selected. This report is intended to update your Board on the current status of proposed vehicle purchases.

Fleet Services is currently proposing to purchase nineteen (19) vehicles as part of the County's regular vehicle replacement program. Of the nineteen vehicles scheduled for replacement at this time, ten (10) are Sheriff's Patrol vehicles. Fleet Services is recommending that Sheriff's Patrol vehicles continue to be gasoline powered vehicles. There are several reasons for this recommendation. Sheriff's patrol cars travel approximately 325 miles per day on one tank of gasoline, while CNG patrol vehicles are limited to 200 miles between fill-ups. There are currently only two (2) CNG fueling stations available in the County. The extra trips to the Government Center fueling station would be an inefficient use of patrol resources. Additionally, if a CNG patrol car ran out of fuel, it would be necessary to have it towed to a fuel station as there is no way to safely transport CNG motor fuel to a disabled vehicle. Additionally, cargo space is limited in the CNG patrol car by the placement of fuel tanks in the trunk. Such placement limits the amount of emergency gear and other items necessary to perform the day-to-day job functions of a Deputy Sheriff and could impact the future placement of equipment necessary for the Sheriff's proposed mobile data computer program. Police patrol vehicles are not currently being offered in "flex/fuel" or other alternative fuel configurations.

The remaining nine (9) vehicles recommended for replacement are assigned to the County's Vehicle Pool and to other departments. These vehicle purchases are planned to be "green" vehicles. Two (2) of the vehicles are proposed to be Toyota Prius hybrid sedans, six (6) will be flex-fuel (methanol/gasoline) mini-pickups, and one (1) will be a Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) powered cargo van.

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The two (2) Toyota Prius sedans will be assigned to our Motor Pool for use as out-of-town vehicles. The Toyota Prius is a vehicle that runs on a combination of gasoline and electric power and is rated as an Ultra Low Emissions Vehicle (ULEV). The six (6) flex/fuel mini-pickups will replace gasoline powered mini-pickups currently being used by Building and Environmental Health inspectors for enforcement and code compliance purposes. These vehicles operate on either methanol, gasoline or a combination of the two and are considered Ultra Low Emission Vehicles. Currently there are no manufacturers offering mini-pickups powered by CNG. Mini-pickups are being offered as electric vehicles. The use of electric vehicles by County inspectors is limited by their short 40 mile range between charges. The ninth "green" vehicle that is being proposed for purchase by Fleet at this time is a fully dedicated CNG cargo van that will be used by the Information Services Department for the transport of computer equipment to and from various County work sites.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that your Board:

1. Accept and file this report on replacement vehicle purchases; and
2. Authorize the General Services Department to continue to purchase gasoline powered vehicles for use as Sheriff's patrol vehicles.

Sincerely,

RECOMMENDED:



BOB WATSON
Director



SUSAN A. MAURIELLO
County Administrative Officer

cc: Auditor-Controller
Sheriff-Coroner
Planning Department
Information Services Department
Environmental Health