

## **Operational Plan: Vehicles**

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### **I. Purpose**

The purpose of this plan is to ensure that the uses of all vehicles in the Chevy Chase Village fleet are well coordinated, effectively managed and responsive to the needs of the community in support of Village operations. This plan outlines the necessary fleet vehicles for the delivery and support of essential and desired government services to the residents and amongst the municipal employees of Chevy Chase Village.

### **II. Vehicles per Department**

The Village fleet includes:

- General Government (includes Village Manager, Administration and Capital Projects/Contracts/Emergency Management)
  - 1 Sport Utility Vehicle (gasoline)<sup>1</sup>
- Police:
  - 3 marked Police Cruisers (gasoline)
  - 1 unmarked car for surveillance operations (Hybrid)
  - 1 unmarked vehicle for use in the department's bait car program (a theft from auto deterrent program)
- Public Works:
  - 3 Heavy Duty Pick-up Trucks (gasoline)
  - 2 Stake-Body Trucks (diesel)
  - 1 Rear-load Yard Waste Truck (diesel)
  - 1 Front-end Loader (diesel tractor)

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<sup>1</sup> This vehicle has been outfitted to serve as a first-responder vehicle (i.e., emergency lights, siren, etc.) for cross-departmental use by the Police Department.

### III. Departmental Vehicle Requirements

#### General Government (includes Village Manager, Administration and Capital Projects/Contracts/Emergency Management)

This department is responsible for permitting, accounting, payroll, human resources, general procurement, Village events and activities, oversight of Village resources, including the Village Hall and public rights-of-way, contracts administration, capital projects management and administration (including GIS administration), planning and oversight and emergency management, public utility coordination and general procurement. To ensure adequate delivery of these services, the following vehicles are needed:

- *General Government Vehicle:*

This vehicle is used by all administrative staff, including the Director of Municipal Operations and Permitting and Code Enforcement Coordinator for travel to and from meetings, code enforcement patrols, capital projects supervision and meeting/event preparations. This vehicle is also used by the Finance Director for trips to financial institutions and meetings, and by the Village Manager and Community Liaison/Administrative Assistant to transport goods, attend meetings, etc. The current administrative vehicle is a non-hybrid SUV<sup>2</sup>.

In the event of inclement weather (i.e., snow events) this vehicle is currently configured as a 4-wheel drive vehicle can be used by the Village Police department to respond to calls for service in the event Village streets have a build-up of snow or ice<sup>1</sup>. Further, with the reduction in size of the police fleet, in late 2012, this vehicle was outfitted to serve as a first-responder vehicle for use by the Police Department as a spare vehicle in support of police operations in the event that a sufficient number of marked cruisers are unavailable.

#### Police

This department is responsible for the protection of citizens and property within the Village's boundaries, including, but not limited to, prevention and suppression of crime<sup>3</sup>; apprehension of offenders and suspected persons; enforcement of criminal laws and municipal ordinances; protection of persons and property; maintenance of records and files pertaining to crime and police activities; detention of prisoners; traffic and pedestrian safety; animal control; and police community relations and educational programs (*see Section 3-3(b) of the Village Code*).

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<sup>2</sup> In keeping with the movement towards greening the Village fleet of vehicles, it is proposed that the replacement of the current administrative vehicle be with a hybrid or green vehicle, such as a Ford Escape or Toyota Prius. It should be noted that although the current vehicle is a SUV, a passenger vehicle (i.e., sedan) is adequate for basic operations, but a four-wheel drive vehicle is preferable; in the past during periods of heavy snowfall, the Police Department has been forced to use the four-wheel drive SUV to provide uninterrupted police service to the Village.

<sup>3</sup> To this end, in early 2013 the Police Department will launch a "bait car program" utilizing an unmarked vehicle wired for video and audio recording, and that contains GPS-equipped items (the 'bait') that the police can track remotely when they are stolen. The Village Bait Car Program is being launched to deter vehicle theft crimes in the community.

The use of each vehicle is subject to relevant Departmental general orders, Village policy, and Maryland law. Use is restricted to Village business<sup>4</sup>. Police vehicles are essential to the delivery of police services, and employees are required to take care of the vehicles that they use. The vehicles in the police fleet have different capabilities. As such, the following protocols will serve as guidance regarding the use of the various types of vehicles.

Police officers must have access to a variety of vehicles in sufficient numbers in order to perform the functions listed above. To ensure adequate delivery of these services, the following vehicles are needed:

- **Marked cars:** These vehicles are used to make traffic stops, transport arrested persons, respond to emergency calls, protect accident scenes, provide high visibility patrol, and do so under heavy use conditions. These units must be ‘police package’ vehicles, fully outfitted to perform emergency response work and for the protection of citizens and officers. Required equipment includes:
  - Emergency overhead light bar and other emergency lighting
  - Siren with control box and P.A. system
  - High output alternator
  - Heavy duty suspension, brakes and engine/transmission cooling systems
  - Mobile data terminal (laptop) and mount
  - Mobile Video System
  - Prisoner shield (‘cage’)
  - Swivel spotlight
  - Reflective exterior decals

**Three (minimum) or four (preferred) marked automobiles equipped for patrol functions and emergency response are required.** On a regular basis during the business day, four (4) officers (including the Chief and the Corporal) are on-duty. Currently, the police department has three (3) marked cars and 1 unmarked car. When one of those cars goes to the shop for service, we would be left with only three (3) cars—meaning that one of the officers would likely have to use the administration vehicle (see above) or ‘double up’ with another officer. Four (4) marked dedicated cruisers (five (5) cars total) would provide a sufficient number of vehicles to allow for a consistent buffer of one (1) car for maintenance intervals. Our current plan is to evaluate operations using only three (3) marked cars to determine if we can do without an additional dedicated marked cruiser.

- **Unmarked car: One unmarked car for covert patrol and surveillance functions.** The unmarked car provides a very effective surveillance and covert patrol platform for our officers. The unmarked car gives our officers a covert option to use to detect criminals without being detected. This vehicle must not appear to be a police car. Preferable makes and models are those which are commonly seen on area roads; small- to

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<sup>4</sup> The Village Police Department does not have a take-home car program, nor is such a program desired at this time.

mid-sized sedans that are popular with the general car-buying public would be most appropriate. Dark colors (black or dark blue) are also preferred so that the vehicles would be more difficult to see at night. These vehicles do not need any special equipment, and while they are effective at covert work, they cannot be used to make traffic stops or to do many of the things that marked cars are used for.

### Public Works

This department is responsible for construction and maintenance of Village streets, curbs and gutters; leaf collection operations; oversight of refuse collection and disposal; maintenance of municipal parks and rights-of-way; maintenance of municipal buildings, snow plowing and salting operations in winter storms, emergency response for downed trees as a result of severe weather, grounds and equipment; and the erection and maintenance of traffic-regulating signs, signals and highway markings (*see Section 3-3(a) of the Village Code*). To ensure adequate delivery of these services, the following vehicles are needed:

- *Heavy Duty Pick-up Trucks (gasoline):*  
The three (3) pick-up trucks are used year round in support of public works functions such as snow plowing, special pick-ups, tree planting, stump grinding, emergency response for downed trees/limbs and general maintenance activities throughout the Village.

During snow plowing operations all three (3) trucks are equipped with snow plows and salt spreaders. In order to effectively and efficiently plow and treat Village roadways the pick-up trucks must have a high enough payload capacity (3,500 lbs) to carry a fully loaded salt spreader and horsepower/torque (350 hp) to push large amounts of snow. Due to the size of the Village, the crews' efforts are divided into three sections for snow plowing operations to ensure the Village streets remain passable. Using all three (3) trucks is vital to ensuring safe passage on Village streets especially if the rate of snowfall reaches one to two inches per hour. During a snow storm of four to six inches, all three pick-up trucks plow around the clock.

Throughout the year, the Village uses these pick-up trucks in support of daily Department functions. During the summer months, one pick-up truck is dedicated to towing the Village water tank, which is used to water newly planted trees on a rotating basis.

The elimination of any of the trucks could result in a reduction of Village Department-required services, and could result in public and occupational safety hazards during daily and snow plowing operations.

- *Stake Body Trucks (diesel):*  
The two (2) stake body trucks are used in support of many different Department operations. The Village has two (2) different sized (by weight) stake body trucks. Throughout the fall and portions of the winter seasons both of these trucks are used as the collections vessels for fallen leaves. During the latter portion of the winter season, the

smaller of the two (2) trucks is used to collect gum balls that fall from the Village's sweet gum trees. The larger of the trucks is used in the winter to transport salt from the Montgomery County maintenance depot to the Public Works yard. In the winter when the larger truck is not being used in support of snow operations, it is used to support other Public Works functions such as sidewalk repairs, special pick-ups and to haul large or over-sized items. During the spring and summer, these trucks are used to assist with brush collection throughout the Village as well as other public works functions such as sidewalk repair, general street repairs and tree stump grinding.

The trucks are also used when an abundance of debris collected through the Village's Special Pick-ups Program are received that overload the Village dumpster. These trucks can be used in the event of an emergency or loss of the Village's trash contractor.

The elimination of one or both of these trucks would result in service reductions or elimination of in-house leaf collection operations and could cause public and occupational safety hazards during daily and snow plowing operations.

- *Rear-load Yard Waste Truck (diesel):*  
The yard waste truck is used almost every day, to collect yard waste/brush. This truck has no other function. In the event of an emergency or loss of the Village's trash contractor, the truck can commence collection of household garbage.

The elimination of the yard-waste truck would result in a loss of service that residents have come to rely on. If the rear-load configuration was abandoned the ability of the Village to collect household refuse in an emergency would not be available.

- *Front-end Loader (diesel tractor):*  
The front-end loader (the loader) is used to pick-up, haul and remove any heavy, large or over-sized item in support of Public Works operations. The loader is a critical piece of equipment required to support snow plowing operations in which it is used to load salt into the Village pick-up truck mounted salt spreaders. The loader is also used to plow snow from around the Village Hall parking lot and Public Works yards. In the event of a large storm the loader is used to move snow from narrow and dead-end streets as was the case in the Blizzards of 2009 and 2010.

The elimination of the loader would result in service level reductions and could cause public and occupational safety hazards during daily and snow plowing operations.

#### **IV. Vehicle Operation and Maintenance**

All Village employees are required to inspect their Village vehicle for safety and service reliability on a daily basis. Employees are prohibited from driving any vehicle that has a problem that would render operation unsafe. Village vehicles may be used only for

official Village business. Village vehicles are conspicuous symbols of authority and the actions of drivers are observed by many.

#### Routine Maintenance and Use

1. The operator is responsible for inspecting the vehicle to make certain all equipment is functional.
2. Each operator must check the vehicle's oil, lights, brakes, tire pressure, safety flares, fuel level and, where appropriate, blocks and tie-down tarp on a daily basis.
3. Vehicle deficiencies shall be reported as soon as possible to the Department Director or his/her designee; safety deficiencies must be reported immediately.
4. Each operator is responsible for the cleanliness of the assigned vehicle.
5. No Village vehicle believed to be unsafe or which does not meet State Inspection standards shall be operated.
6. When operating a Village vehicle, the various factors of weather, road surface conditions, road contour, and traffic congestion must be considered. Such conditions directly affect the safe operation of any motor vehicle. The operator shall evaluate these factors and operate the vehicle accordingly.
7. Vehicles may not be used for personal reasons unless specifically authorized in writing by the Department Director or Village Manager. For example, an operator may not stop at the bank.

Each department is required to designate a fleet maintenance coordinator. The designees are as follows:

- General Government Department: Director of Municipal Operations
- Police Department: Police Sergeant
- Public Works Department: Director of Municipal Operations

All Village vehicles receive routine preventative maintenance at the Montgomery County maintenance garage. In keeping with the "Guidelines on Green Procurement and Greening the Fleet of Vehicles for Chevy Chase Village" regularly preformed maintenance is imperative to ensuring that Village vehicles operate at their optimum performance.

#### **V. Vehicle Replacement and Green Procurement**

Village vehicles will be purchased on an as-needed basis. Based on several factors such as:

- Age
- Condition
- Maintenance Required
- Required Function

Within the Police Department, police cruisers are typically replaced when the cruiser reaches 75,000 miles and above; the maintenance and repair cost of these vehicles tends to increase significantly above the 75,000 mile mark. The Police Department will anticipate when its vehicles are expected to reach that mileage threshold, and will request replacement in the appropriate fiscal year through the normal budget cycle.

All other Village vehicles are replaced on an as-needed basis.

**Total loss:** If a collision or other event results in the total loss of any vehicle such that the number of operational vehicles falls below the minimum required for that department's basic operations in accord with this plan, a replacement vehicle will be acquired as promptly as Village operations and budgetary constraints allow.

#### Greening the Fleet and Procuring Vehicles:

- Optimize routes and schedules (e.g., for regular Village maintenance)
- Perform regular maintenance on vehicles (check tire pressure to ensure optimum pressure and change oil regularly to optimize engine performance).
- Instruct drivers to avoid idling of vehicles whenever possible.
- Incorporate fuel efficiency in bid specifications for each class of vehicle in the fleet.
- Include a minimum fuel efficiency standard and incorporate cost of fuel into life-cycle costing of the vehicle to be purchased.
- Consider buying vehicles that run on alternative fuels, particular for larger vehicles that are required for certain task.
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#### **VI. Vehicle Use Protocols**

The use of each Village vehicle must adhere to certain protocols beyond cognizance of maintenance and repair needs. These protocols ensure that personnel know the appropriate uses for Village vehicles. These protocols are advisory and serve as guidance.

- Does this vehicle meet the needs of the Village government?
- Is this the best vehicle for performing the task at-hand?
- Does efficient execution of this task/service necessitate use of a Village vehicle?

#### **VII. Plan Evaluation and Implementation**

This plan shall be reviewed and updated by the Village Manager. The policy shall be amended periodically due to staffing, budgetary or other changes and developments. Substantive changes shall be subject to review by the Board of Managers. Nothing in this plan shall be construed to imply binding compliance on any department within the Village.