

# Fund 60010: Department of Vehicle Services

**Mission** To establish efficient and effective delivery of fleet services by providing customer agencies with safe, reliable, economical, and environmentally-sound transportation and related support services that are responsive to the needs of customer departments and conserve the value of the vehicle and equipment investment.

**Focus** Fund 60010, Department of Vehicle Services (DVS), provides management and maintenance services to the County's vehicle fleet and maintenance support to the Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS). At the end of FY 2019, there was a combined County and School fleet of 6,278 units, of which 6,134 are maintained by DVS. Of the total DVS-maintained units, 2,474 units belong to FCPS. The remaining 3,660 County units consist of approximately 1,017 vehicles more than one half ton (i.e. specialized equipment, dump trucks, wreckers); 961 emergency service package vehicles (includes motorcycles); 1,053 non-emergency service package light vehicles (one half ton or less in capacity); and 629 off-road and miscellaneous equipment (i.e., loaders, dozers, trailers, mowers, snow plow blades). Not included in the County fleet count are Fairfax Connector buses and vehicles owned by Fairfax County Water Authority. DVS maintains the largest municipal fleet in Virginia and the eighth largest school bus fleet in the nation. In 2019, DVS was named number 11 out of the top 50 Leading Fleets by Government Fleet. The Leading Fleets award recognizes operations that are performing at a high level in fleet innovation and leadership which DVS has been in the top 50 for three consecutive years. DVS has also been in the top 100 of the 100 Best Fleets in the Americas for five years.

The department has four maintenance facilities. The Jermantown and West Ox facilities are located in the central part of the County, and the Newington and Alban facilities are located on the southeast end of the County. These facilities provide timely, responsive and efficient vehicle repairs and services for a broad range of equipment from small engines to large and complex fire apparatus. Road services are also provided at competitive prices ensuring a quick and effective response. Two body shops, located within the Newington and West Ox facilities, provide efficient and timely minor repairs, which reduce the time vehicles are out of service. New vehicle configuration and detail up fit for the Police Department and Sheriff are performed at the Jermantown facility. All four maintenance facilities have been awarded the Blue Seal of Excellence by meeting the standards established by the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE). DVS met the Blue Seal requirement that at least 75 percent of technicians performing diagnosis and repairs are ASE certified. In late FY 2020, the body shop at the West Ox Maintenance Facility was closed and all staff moved to the Newington Maintenance Facility.

DVS manages the County's Vehicle Replacement Reserves, which accumulates funding over a vehicle's life to pay for the replacement of that vehicle when it reaches the end of its service life. The current replacement criteria includes the age, mileage, and condition of the vehicle. This fund is intended primarily for General Fund agencies. In 2019, 33 agencies participated in the fund, which includes approximately 2,360 units. Additionally, DVS manages reserves for Helicopter, Boat, and Police Specialty Vehicle Replacement for the Police Department; an Ambulance and a Large Apparatus Replacement Reserve for the Fire and Rescue Department; a Park Equipment Replacement Reserve for the Park Authority; and a FASTRAN Bus Replacement Reserve for the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services. These reserves allow the agencies to make fixed annual payments to ensure the availability of future funds for a stable replacement program.

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DVS manages the County's highway vehicle fuel program, including servicing and maintaining the County's 53 fuel sites. These sites are located at police stations, fire stations, schools, DVS maintenance facilities, Public Works facilities and Park Authority maintenance centers. DVS coordinates with Agency Directors to maintain tight controls over fuel, ensure agencies charge fuel directly to their agency vehicle codes, and minimize the use of miscellaneous fuel codes.

Other services provided by DVS include: emergency roadside repair; oversight and records maintenance, security administration for the County's Fleet Maintenance Information System (MIS); analysis of current fleet usage; evaluation of new technologies and products; operation of the County's motor pool; technical support/review of vehicle and equipment specifications; and initiation of purchase requests for certain County vehicles and related equipment.

DVS uses a commercially available Maintenance Information System known as M5. M5 tracks all parts issued, tracks commercial charges and labor charges to vehicles and equipment, provides customers with a preventive maintenance schedule, and provides for administration of the motor pool. Most reports for data analysis and billing of user agencies are generated directly in M5. M5 also provides the ability to write "ad hoc" reports tailored to specific data or analysis needs. DVS provides training on all relevant modules of M5 to staff and to customer agencies.

DVS works to ensure that departments and agencies have the fleet means to support their missions while maintaining fleet levels that are appropriate to actual program and service requirements. As part of this responsibility, the Fleet Utilization Management Committee (FUMC) will continue meeting to review the vehicle and equipment fleet to ensure that fleet size, configuration, and usage are consistent with best practices and in compliance with established policy. Also, the FUMC will continue to review and approve requests for fleet additions to ensure there is a legitimate need for fleet growth.

DVS works to support the Fairfax County Operational Energy Strategy and further the objectives of the Board's Environmental Vision by providing goals, targets, and actions in one focus area, electric vehicles. As electric vehicles continue to come to market, the department will procure them when practical. DVS continues to strive for economically-responsible environmental stewardship by working increased fuel efficiency and reduced emissions and petroleum consumption characteristics into vehicle specifications. Specifications for new, heavy duty trucks favor the cleanest diesel engines. Also, DVS is committed to environmental excellence and will continue to participate in the Virginia Environmental Excellence Program (VEEP). As a facility-based participant, DVS uses environmental management systems and pollution prevention systems to maintain strong environmental records above and beyond legal requirements.

On an annual basis, the County reviews current usage and fuel pricing to analyze and project fuel prices. The FY 2021 budget estimates a user price of \$1.54 per gallon for unleaded and \$1.63 per gallon for diesel. While these figures are consistent with FY 2020 adopted user prices, actual FY 2020 user prices trended higher. As fuel prices fluctuate, County staff will continue to review price data on a monthly basis to ensure prices remain within a reasonable level. If prices increase significantly, an adjustment may be required as part of a quarterly review to ensure that user agencies have sufficient funding to cover fuel related costs.

Recently, the Information Technology section completed a Request for Proposal to upgrade the motor pool system. A new process was necessary to offer online reservations and automated key management that will improve fleet management.

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## Pandemic Response and Impact

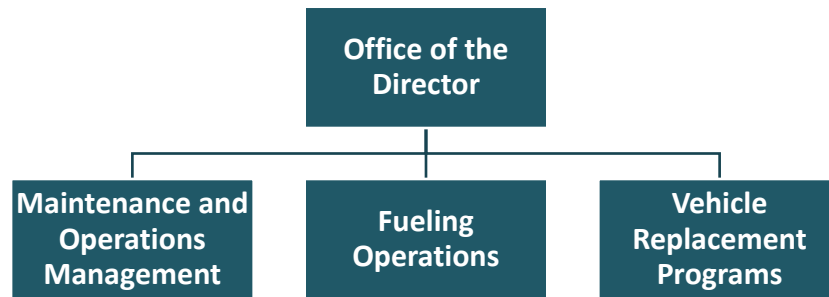
DVS has noticed a dramatic decline in the use of fleet vehicles during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is attributed to uncertain times and changing workplace schedules. The motorpool at the Government Center was closed on March 30, 2020, and the Fleet Utilization Management Committee (FUMC) announced on April 3 that it would not complete its annual low-utilization review of the fleet in FY 2020.

DVS maintenance facilities have remained open and staff have taken extra precautions to ensure all vehicles are sanitized before and after use. Sneeze guards have been installed at all customer service counters and sanitation wipes are used to wipe keys before and after use. However, productivity declined in April and May when the Health Department advised sixty-one employees at three of the four maintenance facilities to self-quarantine for a 14-day period. Maintenance work was re-distributed to ensure continuity of operations.

Of the total DVS-maintained units, 2,474 or 40 percent belong to Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS). When FCPS transitioned to full-time online instruction in March 2020, school buses stopped operating and fleet usage declined dramatically, resulting in decreased work orders for DVS. With this decrease in workload, it is anticipated the DVS labor and fuel categories will fall short of the budget.

Fuel prices dropped drastically as consumers across the nation are driving less due to stay-at-home orders. In April 2020, the national average for a gallon of gasoline fell under \$2.00 and diesel fell under \$2.40. The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) Short-Term Energy Outlook for May 2020 expects "U.S. average gasoline prices to remain lower than \$2/gal until March 2021."

## Organizational Chart



## Budget and Staff Resources

Category	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Adopted	FY 2020 Revised	FY 2021 Advertised	FY 2021 Adopted
<b>FUNDING</b>					
<b>Expenditures:</b>					
Personnel Services	\$24,137,594	\$25,311,905	\$25,311,905	\$26,325,123	\$25,311,905
Operating Expenses	48,993,355	40,538,455	46,076,192	39,474,720	39,464,720
Capital Equipment	14,342,703	20,507,617	22,319,815	17,234,657	17,234,657
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$87,473,652</b>	<b>\$86,357,977</b>	<b>\$93,707,912</b>	<b>\$83,034,500</b>	<b>\$82,011,282</b>
<b>AUTHORIZED POSITIONS/FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)</b>					
Regular	264 / 264	264 / 264	264 / 264	265 / 265	264 / 264

## Fund 60010: Department of Vehicle Services

### FY 2021 Funding Adjustments

*The following funding adjustments from the FY 2020 Adopted Budget Plan are necessary to support the FY 2021 program. Included are all adjustments recommended by the County Executive that were approved by the Board of Supervisors, as well as any additional Board of Supervisors' actions, as approved in the adoption of the Budget on May 12, 2020.*

#### Operating Expenses (\$1,073,735)

A net decrease of \$1,073,735 is associated with lower costs for non-fuel related Operating Expenses primarily in the area of commercial repairs. Fuel related costs remaining flat at \$1.54 per gallon for unleaded and \$1.63 per gallon for diesel.

#### Capital Equipment (\$3,272,960)

Capital Equipment funding of \$17,234,657, a decrease of \$3,272,960 from the FY 2020 Adopted Budget Plan, includes the following: \$5,130,258 to replace vehicles that meet criteria; \$8,572,286 to purchase ten vehicles from the Large Apparatus Reserve; \$1,827,299 for the purchase of five ambulances for the Fire and Rescue Department; \$104,150 to purchase three smart trailers and one mobile restroom for the Police Department; \$513,525 to purchase six buses and six sedans from the FASTRAN replacement reserve for the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services; \$300,000 for Helicopter maintenance; and \$120,109 to purchase refrigerant recovery and recycling machines, a heavy service truck for standard welding and heavy service truck for aluminum welding, a disc brake maintenance dolly for the Newington Maintenance Facility, Wi-Fi to enable diagnostic equipment to work for the West Ox Maintenance Facility, and the relocation of a Hunter Hawkeye Alignment System for the Jermantown Maintenance Facility; \$667,030 to replace two single walled tanks at the West Ox Maintenance Facility.

### Changes to FY 2020 Adopted Budget Plan

*The following funding adjustments reflect all approved changes in the FY 2020 Revised Budget Plan since passage of the FY 2020 Adopted Budget Plan. Included are all adjustments made as part of the FY 2019 Carryover Review, FY 2020 Third Quarter Review, and all other approved changes through April 30, 2020.*

#### Carryover Adjustments \$3,128,180

As part of the *FY 2019 Carryover Review*, the Board of Supervisors approved funding of \$3,128,180 due primarily to encumbered carryover of \$3,300,524, and a decrease of \$172,344 in operating expenditures.

#### Third Quarter Adjustments \$4,221,755

As part of the *FY 2020 Third Quarter Review*, the Board of Supervisors approved funding of \$4,221,755, including an increase in appropriations of \$4,000,000 due to higher than budgeted fuel prices. DVS, with the Department of Management and Budget (DMB), conducted analyses of year-to-date actual fuel costs, and trending fuel prices to determine a necessary increase in fuel appropriations. The additional \$221,755 was to fund the Police In Car Video Reserve program, for which an appropriation was not included as part of the FY 2020 Adopted Budget Plan.

### Cost Centers

The Department of Vehicle Services provides services in support of the County's fleet in three distinct cost centers: Maintenance and Operations Management, Vehicle Replacement Reserves and Fueling Operations. The majority of the agency's positions and funding are centered in Maintenance and Operations Management.

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### Maintenance and Operations Management

The Maintenance and Operations Management cost center provides centralized maintenance and repair services and performs required special tasks on vehicles and equipment owned by County agencies and Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) through the use of County staff and contractors. DVS ensures that these vehicles and equipment are maintained in safe operational condition and are in accordance with all federal, state, and county policies, procedures and regulations, and ensure that vehicles are maintained as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible with consideration to the customer's requirements.

Category	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Adopted	FY 2020 Revised	FY 2021 Advertised	FY 2021 Adopted
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>					
Total Expenditures	\$44,002,858	\$48,284,386	\$48,285,279	\$48,259,964	\$47,239,935
<b>AUTHORIZED POSITIONS/FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)</b>					
Regular	262 / 262	262 / 262	262 / 262	263 / 263	262 / 262

### Vehicle Replacement Programs

The Vehicle Replacement Programs cost center manages the Vehicle Replacement Reserve which accumulates funding over the life of a vehicle (or equipment) in order to pay for the replacement of the vehicle at such time as the vehicle meets replacement criteria. This reserve is intended primarily for General Fund agencies. In addition, the cost center manages several other specialty vehicle replacement reserves for the Police Department, Fire and Rescue Department, Park Authority and the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services. These reserves ensure the systematic replacement of vehicles which have completed their cost-effective life cycles.

Category	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Adopted	FY 2020 Revised	FY 2021 Advertised	FY 2021 Adopted
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>					
Total Expenditures	\$20,954,632	\$20,659,883	\$23,955,567	\$17,097,518	\$17,097,518
<b>AUTHORIZED POSITIONS/FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)</b>					
Regular	1 / 1	1 / 1	1 / 1	1 / 1	1 / 1

### Fueling Operations

The Fueling Operations cost center manages the County's highway vehicle fuel program by purchasing over 10.5 million gallons of fuel annually at a significant cost savings to agencies. In addition, the cost center is responsible for managing the automated fuel system and maintaining the County's 53 fuel sites while ensuring compliance with federal and state underground storage tank regulations.

Category	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Adopted	FY 2020 Revised	FY 2021 Advertised	FY 2021 Adopted
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>					
Total Expenditures	\$22,516,162	\$17,413,708	\$21,467,066	\$17,677,018	\$17,673,829
<b>AUTHORIZED POSITIONS/FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)</b>					
Regular	1 / 1	1 / 1	1 / 1	1 / 1	1 / 1

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## Position Detail

The FY 2021 Adopted Budget Plan includes the following positions:

DEPARTMENT OF VEHICLE SERVICES – 264 Positions					
1	Director	66	Vehicle and Equipment Technicians I		
2	Assistant Directors	4	Auto Body Repairers II		
5	Administrative Assistants IV	2	Auto Body Repairers I		
7	Administrative Assistants III	1	Safety Analyst II		
4	Material Mgmt. Supervisors	1	Heavy Equipment Operator		
12	Material Mgmt. Specialists II	1	Financial Specialist III		
10	Material Mgmt. Specialists I	1	Financial Specialist II		
2	Management Analysts III	1	Business Analyst III		
2	Management Analysts II	1	Network/Telecom Analyst II		
1	Human Resources Generalist II	1	Information Technology Tech. III		
1	Human Resources Generalist I	5	Vehicle and Equipment Superintendents		
8	Vehicle and Equipment Technicians III	5	Assistant Superintendents		
102	Vehicle and Equipment Technicians II	18	Vehicle and Equipment Supervisors		

## Performance Measurement Results

A total of 6,278 County and School units (motorized and non-motorized) were maintained in FY 2019. It should be noted that “units maintained” in any given year may include vehicles authorized as additions in a previous year, but not received until the indicated year.

The number of vehicles in the Vehicle Replacement Reserve (VRR) increased in FY 2019 primarily due to normal fluctuations in the number of vehicles in the VRR at different points in time. DVS replaced 100 percent of VRR vehicles that met the established criteria in FY 2019.

Fueling Operations measures examine the cost savings between County contracts and private providers, as well as how satisfied County vehicle drivers are with fueling operations. In FY 2019, the average cost per gallon of \$2.03 slightly increased from the FY 2018 average cost of \$1.98. Given the amount of fuel gallons used by the County, the savings associated with purchasing unleaded and diesel gasoline in-house were significant but short of the \$0.10 target for FY 2019.

Indicator	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Estimate/Actual	FY 2020 Estimate	FY 2021 Estimate
<b>Maintenance and Operations Management</b>					
Vehicle availability rate	98.0%	98.3%	96.0%/97.6%	96.0%	96.0%
Percent of days vehicle availability rate target was achieved	100.0%	100.0%	90.0%/100.0%	90.0%	90.0%
<b>Vehicle Replacement Programs</b>					
Percent of vehicles meeting criteria that are replaced	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%/100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>Fueling Operations</b>					
Price savings between in-house and commercial stations: unleaded gasoline	\$0.280	\$0.223	\$0.100/\$0.091	\$0.100	\$0.100
Price savings between in-house and commercial stations: diesel	\$0.330	\$0.386	\$0.100/\$0.377	\$0.373	\$0.373

A complete list of performance measures can be viewed at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget/fy-2021-adopted-performance-measures-pm>

## Fund 60010: Department of Vehicle Services

### FUND STATEMENT

Category	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Adopted Budget Plan	FY 2020 Revised Budget Plan	FY 2021 Advertised Budget Plan	FY 2021 Adopted Budget Plan
<b>Beginning Balance</b>	<b>\$45,077,230</b>	<b>\$32,167,904</b>	<b>\$47,466,442</b>	<b>\$38,422,741</b>	<b>\$38,200,986</b>
Vehicle Replacement Reserve	\$11,376,880	\$8,648,040	\$9,831,488	\$9,155,022	\$9,155,022
Facility Infrastructure/Renewal Reserve	1,021,631	1,021,631	1,021,631	1,021,631	1,021,631
Ambulance Replacement Reserve	5,297,097	3,432,005	4,157,965	2,523,975	2,523,975
Fire Apparatus Replacement Reserve	9,838,316	5,070,966	12,412,267	8,979,609	8,979,609
FASTRAN Bus Replacement Reserve	1,993,745	1,408,608	2,129,301	1,686,829	1,686,829
Helicopter Replacement Reserve	6,860,466	4,986,609	6,286,152	5,773,752	5,773,752
Helicopter Maintenance Reserve	332,742	314,022	664,022	364,022	364,022
Boat Replacement Reserve	139,141	189,350	239,559	239,559	239,559
Police Specialty Vehicle Reserve	2,555,920	2,299,648	3,098,947	1,858,199	1,858,199
Police In Car Video Reserve	1,296,002	650,000	2,749,922	2,099,922	1,878,167
Parks Equipment Reserve	1,604	1,604	1,604	1,604	1,604
Fuel Operations Reserve	278,476	145,421	873,584	718,617	718,617
Fuel Price Stabilization Reserve	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,000,000
Other	85,210	0	0	0	0
<b>Unreserved Beginning Balance</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Revenue:</b>					
Vehicle Replacement Charges	\$7,648,552	\$9,137,115	\$9,137,115	\$9,137,115	\$9,137,115
Ambulance Repl. Charges	756,222	464,000	464,000	464,000	464,000
Fire Apparatus Repl. Charges	8,186,509	4,659,000	4,659,000	4,659,000	4,659,000
FASTRAN Bus Repl. Charges	609,962	384,962	384,962	384,962	384,962
Helicopter Replacement Charges	1,574,286	787,143	0	787,143	787,143
Helicopter Maintenance Charges	700,000	350,000	0	350,000	350,000
Boat Replacement Charges	100,418	50,209	0	50,209	50,209
Police Specialty Vehicle Charges	1,079,518	481,211	0	574,168	574,168
Police In Car Video Charges	2,178,479	0	0	0	0
Parks Equipment Charges	0	200,000	200,000	0	0
Vehicle Fuel Charges	23,111,270	17,312,099	21,312,099	17,677,018	17,677,018
Other Charges	43,917,648	48,285,280	48,285,280	47,895,136	46,871,918
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$89,862,864</b>	<b>\$82,111,019</b>	<b>\$84,442,456</b>	<b>\$81,978,751</b>	<b>\$80,955,533</b>
<b>Total Available</b>	<b>\$134,940,094</b>	<b>\$114,278,923</b>	<b>\$131,908,898</b>	<b>\$120,401,492</b>	<b>\$119,156,519</b>
<b>Expenditures:</b>					
Vehicle Replacement	\$9,193,944	\$8,486,250	\$9,813,581	\$5,130,258	\$5,130,258
Ambulance Replacement	1,895,354	2,088,342	2,097,990	1,827,299	1,827,299
Fire Apparatus Replacement	5,612,558	7,096,543	8,091,658	8,572,286	8,572,286
FASTRAN Bus Replacement	474,406	598,000	827,434	513,525	513,525
Helicopter Replacement	95,000	0	0	0	0
Helicopter Camera	2,053,600	0	512,400	0	0
Helicopter Maintenance	368,720	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000
Boat Replacement	0	0	0	0	0
Police Specialty Replacement	536,491	1,240,748	1,240,748	104,150	104,150
Police In Car Video Replacement	724,559	650,000	871,755	650,000	650,000
Parks Equipment Replacement	0	200,000	200,000	0	0

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### FUND STATEMENT

Category	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Adopted Budget Plan	FY 2020 Revised Budget Plan	FY 2021 Advertised Budget Plan	FY 2021 Adopted Budget Plan
<b>Fuel Operations:</b>					
Fuel <sup>1</sup>	\$20,962,878	\$15,980,543	\$19,980,543	\$15,980,543	\$15,980,543
Other Fuel Related Expenses	1,553,284	1,433,165	1,486,523	1,696,475	1,693,286
<b>Other:</b>					
Personnel Services	\$24,054,772	\$25,231,449	\$25,231,449	\$26,241,478	\$25,231,449
Operating Expenses	19,872,261	22,962,112	22,963,006	21,898,377	21,888,377
Capital Equipment	75,825	90,825	90,825	120,109	120,109
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$87,473,652</b>	<b>\$86,357,977</b>	<b>\$93,707,912</b>	<b>\$83,034,500</b>	<b>\$82,011,282</b>
<b>Total Disbursements</b>	<b>\$87,473,652</b>	<b>\$86,357,977</b>	<b>\$93,707,912</b>	<b>\$83,034,500</b>	<b>\$82,011,282</b>
<b>Ending Balance<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>\$47,466,442</b>	<b>\$27,920,946</b>	<b>\$38,200,986</b>	<b>\$37,366,992</b>	<b>\$37,145,237</b>
Vehicle Replacement Reserve	\$9,831,488	\$9,298,905	\$9,155,022	\$13,161,879	\$13,161,879
Facility Infr./Renewal Reserve	1,021,631	1,021,631	1,021,631	1,021,631	1,021,631
Ambulance Replacement Reserve	4,157,965	1,807,663	2,523,975	1,160,676	1,160,676
Fire Apparatus Replacement Reserve	12,412,267	2,633,423	8,979,609	5,066,323	5,066,323
FASTRAN Bus Replacement Reserve	2,129,301	1,195,570	1,686,829	1,558,266	1,558,266
Helicopter Replacement Reserve	6,286,152	5,773,752	5,773,752	6,560,895	6,560,895
Helicopter Maintenance Reserve	664,022	364,022	364,022	414,022	414,022
Boat Replacement Reserve	239,559	239,559	239,559	289,768	289,768
Police Specialty Vehicle Reserve	3,098,947	1,540,111	1,858,199	2,328,217	2,328,217
Police In Car Video Reserve	2,749,922	0	1,878,167	1,449,922	1,228,167
Parks Equipment Reserve	1,604	1,604	1,604	1,604	1,604
Fuel Operations Reserve	873,584	44,706	718,617	353,789	353,789
Fuel Price Stabilization Reserve	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,000,000
Other	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Unreserved Ending Balance</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>

<sup>1</sup> The Ending Balance in Fund 60010, Department of Vehicle Services, fluctuates based on vehicle replacement requirements in a given year. Except in rare cases, vehicles are not replaced until they have met both established age and mileage criteria. In years where more vehicles meet their criteria and are replaced, the ending balance will be lower (and vice versa).