



Sustainable Fleet Policy

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1.0 Purpose

Buncombe County’s Board of Commissioners passed the County’s 2025 Strategic Plan with a carbon reduction goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) both internally and for the community. Vehicle fleet fossil fuel consumption contributes to a significant portion of the County’s internal GHG emissions. This policy sets standards for Buncombe County’s fleet procurement and maintenance program in an effort to ensure a reduction in the County’s GHG emissions.

This policy is intended to direct County departments to procure sustainable vehicles and meet strategic goals by focusing on two specific strategies:

- Reducing energy consumption: reduce fuel consumed by internal combustion engines by right-sizing the fleet and by deploying telematics technologies.
 - Establish a process for fleet-right sizing to reduce fuel demand by minimizing the number of County-owned vehicles
 - Establish guidelines for the deployment of telematics technologies to reduce fuel consumption on new and legacy fossil fuel-powered vehicles
 - Route optimization
- Changing the energy County operations consume away from fossil fuels: incorporate alternative energy sources into the County fleet. This will be accomplished by:
 - Ensuring fleet procurements align with strategic goals by purchasing zero or low emission vehicles
 - Ensuring electric vehicle and alternative fuel infrastructure deployment is aligned with vehicle purchases

2.0 Applicability

This policy applies to all Buncombe County departments and employees. Where there is conflict with any department-specific policy, this document will supersede.

3.0 Policy

3.1 Purchase/Replacement: To ensure that all vehicle purchases align with the County's GHG goals, proposed vehicle purchases will be assigned to a tiered system, assigned by Fleet Management, based on the degree of emissions reduction. Fleet Management will identify the highest tier in which a suitable replacement vehicle is available based on available vehicle technologies.

Fleet Management will also identify the specific vehicle make and model that supports fleet standardization. Consideration will be given to operational needs (ex.- pursuit-rated public safety vehicles) in assessing the available vehicles. Departments can appeal the tier assigned by following the Sustainable Fleet Procedures document.

3.1.1 Vehicle Replacement Tiered Structure:

Tier I – Zero emission vehicle

Tier II – Alternative fueled internal combustion engine

Tier III – Hybrid internal combustion engine

Tier IV – Conventional internal combustion engine – Gasoline

Tier V – Conventional internal combustion engine – Diesel

These purchase and replacement guidelines apply to all vehicles acquired through purchase, lease, or donation with the exception of the following:

- Vehicles rented for the purposes of emergency response deployment.
- Unmarked law enforcement vehicles used primarily for covert operations. For the purposes of this policy, these vehicles are defined as vehicles that receive a confidential license plate and are used in such a way that their identification as County vehicles would incapacitate them from performing their normal duties.
- Vehicles for Mountain Mobility may not be required to comply with this policy. In any instance where federal or state guidelines prevent Mountain Mobility from compliance, those federal or state guidelines shall supersede this policy.

3.2 Funding: Vehicles will be funded through the capital improvement process. Departments are encouraged to seek alternative funding sources such as grants, so long as they are able to purchase vehicles from their approved tier, as laid out in this policy. Vehicle leases and long-term rentals must be approved by Fleet Management and must comply with the purchasing requirements established in this policy.

Funding for EVs and other alternative fueled vehicles should follow the vehicle replacement process that is laid out in this policy. The Office of Sustainability will work with departments to find the most effective source of funding if outside resources are needed to pilot new technologies in order to push the County forward to achieve strategic goals (i.e. grants, lease options, etc.).

3.3 Data Collection: In order to make effective decisions, the County must be informed by data collected and a thorough analysis of available fleet-wide information. A number of methodologies may be used, but the following three types of data in particular should be leveraged whenever possible.

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- Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL) data: this data includes vehicle movement patterns, vehicle utilization, and vehicle idling time.
- Electric Capacity and Efficiency: The capability of County facilities to support the deployment of EV charging infrastructure, and the extent to which the County is optimizing the use of EV charging assets.
- Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) model: The model includes the total cost of maintenance, fuel, and upfront capital cost of the vehicle.

Fleet management will perform a vehicle utilization analysis annually to ensure budgetary alignment. Staff will use available data to identify vehicles that are underutilized by miles or hours of operation. This analysis will include a comparison between the total cost of ownership for a vehicle compared to the actual usage. Fleet Management will collaborate with departments to determine whether vehicles should be reassigned to other areas of need or eliminated from the fleet completely.

3.4 Charging Infrastructure: All County facility renovations or new construction projects will include necessary electric vehicle charging infrastructure as appropriate. Departments should utilize the most efficient mix of charging infrastructure that is sufficient to maintain a minimum daily charge (based on operational need) for their EV fleet. Buncombe County will deploy a mixture of Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 EV charging stations and will align charging needs based on data. Infrastructure charging deployments will be prioritized based on:

- Site EV charger readiness factors include existing electrical load, capacity of site, underground conduit and electrical line capacity
- EV suitability of vehicles by site
- Existing EV deployments
- Departmental requests

4.0 Policy Non-Compliance

Employees willfully violating the terms and conditions of this policy may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

5.0 Audit

All policies for Buncombe County may be subject to audit or review as outlined in the [Internal Auditor's Statement](#).

6.0 Definitions

1. *Greenhouse Gas* – A gas that absorbs and emits radiant energy within the thermal infrared range and which cause increased global temperatures resulting in severely negative environmental impacts.
2. *Telematics* - the branch of information technology which deals with the long-distance transmission of computerized information

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3. *Automated Vehicle Locator* – A device that uses a global positioning system to remotely track the location, speed, and other vehicle specific data.
4. *Electric Vehicle (EV)* – A vehicle that is propelled by one or more electric motors using energy stored in rechargeable batteries.

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