



"...meeting community needs...enhancing quality of life."

POLICE DEPARTMENT

222 South Walnut Street • Appleton, WI 54911-5899
(920) 832-5500 • Fax (920) 832-5553
<http://www.appleton.org/police>

To: CEA Committee
Director Paula Vandehey
From: Chief Todd Thomas
Date: April 2, 2017
Subject: Intensive Use vehicle transition to Ford SUV

The police department received notice in 2015 that the Chevrolet Impala would not be available in 2017. A Vehicle Committee consisting of CEA personnel and APD officers was created to examine options for 2017 and beyond. The group researched and examined the issues and concluded that the SUV is the best overall police patrol vehicle.

Because it was cost prohibitive to transition the entire fleet, they recommended the AWD Sedan for 2017, with the belief we would be incrementally incorporating SUV's into the patrol fleet when we could fund the transition.

Below is the Vehicle Committee's findings regarding the SUV:

The committee also recognized that there is an overwhelming desire amongst officers to incorporate more SUV's into the patrol fleet. The committee believes that the Ford Police Interceptor SUV has a number of additional benefits, not offered by the sedan.

- *The SUV package allows for more storage space for officers to keep the equipment needed to perform their duties.*
- *We regularly see officers utilizing the prisoner compartment of the sedans to store additional equipment, which can be problematic.*
- *The SUV also provides ergonomic advantages that the sedan does not. The larger door opening and higher platform make entry and exit to the SUV much easier for officers.*
- *The elevated seat height and larger, less obstructed windows of the SUV also give the officer far more visibility to traffic and their surroundings. This equates to safer driving, and better observation of traffic infractions and other offenses.*
- *The SUV's higher profile, increased roof height, and extended roof length make it more visible to the public. Greater visibility allows for an increased awareness of police presence, an increased ability for citizens to see the vehicle when needed, and an increased impact when using emergency lighting equipment.*

As the department moves forward with the acquisition of more SUV's, a notable feature between the Ford sedan and SUV is the ability to interchange a number of parts and components between the Ford SUV and sedan models.

In 2018 we will be replacing our 13 **Intensive Use** patrol vehicles and this is the optimal time to make the transition for this portion of our marked fleet. The intensive use vehicles are shared by officers and operated 24 hours a day. These vehicles accumulate two to three times the mileage our other patrol units do. They are usually the first vehicles to break down, are out of service the most, and need the most maintenance. When they are rotated out they are of less value because of the condition they are in and their high mileage. An SUV is more durable and would maintain a higher value, and may have an extended life.

A transition to SUV's has been occurring across the country, with police departments and sheriffs' offices of all sizes, for many reasons:

- Police Departments are carrying more equipment in their vehicles that they need immediate access to when responding to dangerous situations. We are expected to have vests, helmets, less lethal weapons, emergency medical equipment, SWAT equipment and other pieces of equipment to save or protect lives.
- There is an expectation now to have this equipment always available. We have seen tragic incidents occur nationally, and agencies then questioned about why they didn't have equipment available to protect themselves or the public.
- Appleton SWAT team members carry their equipment with them, for obvious reasons, but this takes up space in their vehicles and they are not able to carry other equipment they need such as cones, flares, brooms, and other equipment. Frequently they have to use their back seat to store equipment, which is problematic when they have to transport prisoners.
- A supervisor told me when they have to transport multiple subjects, like victims or families, the SUV's are much better suited for that.
- The SUV's have the backup camera systems; backing crashes are the majority of LE at-fault crashes.
- The ergonomics of the SUV are better than the sedan. The higher stance of the SUV allows quicker and easier access and exit from the vehicle with less twisting and turning of the core. This is an area of common officer injury and complaint. There is also less "hang-up" on the steering wheel and seatbelt, during a high stress situation this could be a factor in safety.
- The sight lines make for safer operation, fewer blind spots and the squad is much more visible.
- The traction and control are extremely better in the snow, ice, and inclement weather we frequently drive in.
- The MPG for our current SUV's compared to our Sedans is similar. As the gas mileage has increased with the SUV's this isn't an issue anymore.
- The longevity and durability of the SUV is much better than the sedan, especially one that is a high mileage vehicle.
- When the vehicles are rotated out to other departments they will be able to benefit from the additional storage for the equipment that inspections, DPW, and other departments require, while also providing safer operation in inclement weather.

Offsetting the additional cost:

If we are going to make additions like this I believe we should first look to offset those costs in our own budget before we ask to pass them on to the taxpayers or impact other department's budgets.

We have identified the areas in our budget to offset this one year cost of approximately \$52,780. The areas we will be recommending changes to in our 2018 budget to offset the additional cost would be the removal or reduction in costs for:

- Range lead mining
- SMART unit
- ISU equipment budget
- Radar certifications
- Blood draw costs
- Printing
- Miscellaneous supplies and equipment

We will be able to offset the cost by pulling from portions of the above budgets and putting off non-critical purchases for a year.

The additional cost to lease these vehicles going forward will be minimal and absorbed in our budget.

Our plan would be to continue to incrementally transition our patrol fleet, as we can afford to, by offsetting costs or identifying other areas of savings in our CEA budget.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Todd Thomas', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Chief Todd Thomas