Transportation/Fleet

Overview:

GMP's statewide operations are supported by a transportation fleet of nearly 600 vehicles and mobile equipment with a wide range of vehicle types, including over 100 bucket and digger derrick trucks, 60 medium truck chassis between 3500 and 5500 series, 8 small boats for hydro facilities, 4 cranes, 2 semi/tractors, over 20 off-road tracked units, 18 fork lifts, 170 equipment and reel trailers, about 150 small cars/SUVs and light duty pickups and various ATVs, scissor lifts and mobile substations.

This diverse and distributed fleet supports all of our operations of field and office personnel, including transmission and distribution, power production, meter operations, substation operations, information technology and new initiatives. Fleet vehicles carry out our initial response when storms hit our transmission and distribution lines, and contribute greatly to our ability to recover from these events and provide resilient service for customers. Much of the heavy equipment, such as bucket trucks, digger derrick trucks and off-road tracked equipment, are operated in rural, rough terrain and extreme weather conditions whose engines run long daily duty cycles to power hydraulics and aerial equipment. The smaller vehicles vary in their use from field designers who meet with customers to scope out and design projects to our meter technicians who travel many miles to manage the integrity of our meter operations, to the small pool of vehicles available for other business travel. Winter operations expose our vehicles—and especially those used for winter storm response—to road salt and harsh weather, increasing the need for proactive maintenance and lifecycle management. Trailers are used to transport equipment, haul poles, carry tools and other materials needed and install wire to support distribution infrastructure.

The entire fleet is maintained by 12 experienced diesel mechanics, who operate out of four district office garages in day and night shifts to ensure vehicle breakdowns and safety items experienced can be properly addressed and ready for work before the next workday. Maintenance activities range from preventive services and safety inspections to welding, bodywork, and full engine overhauls.

Fleet Objective:

Our fleet management objective is to provide safe, reliable, and right-sized transportation resources that balance cost efficiency, uptime, and readiness. Lifecycle planning ensures predictable replacement schedules, helps avoid price shocks, and mitigates the impact of supply chain constraints.

Our updated fleet replacement strategy is targeted to achieve the following replacement cycles:

1) 8-year replacement cycle for capital equipment such as medium-duty trucks, utility vehicles and trailers.
2) 8-year replacement cycle for light-duty vehicles such as pickup trucks and pooled passenger cars/SUVs .

Fleet Capital Planning Strategy:

We develop our Fleet Capital Plan by assessing our needs against several criteria:

- **Safety**: Ensure that our vehicles are safe for travel and operation on public roads for our employees, customers, and the public.
    - Our fleet mechanics are licensed by the State of Vermont to perform vehicle inspections using the guidelines set by the Vermont Agency of Transportation. Operators also perform daily checks of the vehicle, and maintenance technicians perform overall safety and operational reviews during each scheduled service.

- **Age/Reliability Replacement**: Prioritizing replacement of older assets to reduce breakdowns, downtime, and repair costs. As vehicles age, mechanical degradation, wear, rust, rot, and probability of catastrophic failure increases, and repairs become more costly with longer downtimes from parts lead times and repair duration.
    - The final factor in identifying the vehicles to be replaced is the annual cost of maintenance. Because costs increase as vehicles age, our goal is to first replace the oldest units to reduce our overall cost.

- **Operational Fit:** Our current fleet content is very broad due to the nature of the work being performed and type of travel. The mix of vehicles in the fleet includes both on- and off-road trucks and track units, trailers, ATVs, forklifts and small passenger vehicles, chosen dependent upon end use. For example, off road vehicles have become both a benefit to customers through more timely restoration in remote locations as well as a safety benefit for GMP employees, using an aerial lift where in the past this work was performed by climbing poles.

- **Resiliency & Preparedness**: Ensure that current fleet content is prepared to support GMP's storm response efforts and maintain reliable and resilient service for our customers (e.g., consider vehicle to grid capability when available for EVs; range/MPG; off road and storage capabilities).

- **Decarbonization and New Technology**: Projects continue to replace our existing fleet with the most efficient vehicles available and as with all of our work continue to find ways to reduce our fossil fuel consumption. Electric vehicles have become a significant component of our fleet and will continue over time in order to reduce carbon and save on long-term operating costs. Our current plan is to convert 100% of our passenger cars/SUVs and our light duty trucks to full EV by 2030. As part of the Volkswagen emissions settlement, GMP received a grant from the State of Vermont to support the purchase of a fully electric digger truck. The digger derrick truck is expected to be received and put into service in FY27.