

FACT SHEET

Addressing Safety Concerns: Aging Equipment Fleet

Safety is the cornerstone of the Iowa DOT's mission, both for our employees and the public we serve. Ensuring that our fleet remains safe, reliable, and equipped with the latest technology is crucial to this mission. With an aging fleet, we face increasing challenges in maintaining high safety standards. The additional funding we are requesting will directly support our ongoing safety initiatives, allowing us to mitigate risks and improve the overall safety profile of our operations.



Aging Fleet

Fleet Size & Age

A large portion of our vehicles have exceeded recommended operational limits, resulting in more frequent breakdowns, higher repair costs, longer downtime, and providing fewer public services.

FLEET SIZE:
3,046 VEHICLES

AVG. AGE OF VEHICLE:
16.23 YEARS

Key Safety Concerns With An Aging Fleet:

- **Mechanical Failures:** As vehicles age, the likelihood of mechanical breakdowns significantly increases. These failures can occur unexpectedly, often while in operation on busy roadways, creating hazardous situations for both DOT workers and the public.
- **Safety:** Within this year's request are safety items that we have not previously had, or we have tested and determined the items to improve safety. We aim to purchase automated patcher trucks to get employees off the road and into a vehicle, significantly improving their safety when filling potholes.
- **Increased Downtime and Response Delays:** Breakdowns result in vehicles being taken out of service more frequently, which can delay critical road maintenance operations, snow removal, or emergency responses, directly affecting public safety on Iowa's highways and streets.

Fleet Modernization

Investing in new vehicles is not just about replacing old equipment—it's about the safety of our employees and the public. By modernizing our fleet, we can continue to uphold the high safety standards we are committed to, while reducing the risk of costly accidents and breakdowns that could jeopardize both road safety and the efficiency of our operations. The need for newer, more reliable vehicles is urgent to make sure all Iowans have the opportunity to succeed in a safe and prosperous state.

Efficient Fleet Management: Asking Only For What We Need

The DOT takes a conservative, needs-based approach to fleet management. Every vehicle request is rigorously evaluated based on operational needs, vehicle condition, and usage. Our fleet management team uses advanced data analytics and historical usage patterns to find critical needs while making sure we are not overburdening the budget with unnecessary requests.

We have evaluated the fleet and found that a lack of investment in vehicle attachments is resulting in costly damage to our trucks. This request includes replacing equipment that has far surpassed its useful life and will greatly reduce ongoing repair costs.



PROACTIVE MAINTENANCE STRATEGY

We've extended the life of our vehicles as much as safely possible through robust maintenance practices.



SELECTIVE PURCHASES

Our requests are based solely on current needs to ensure that we maintain operational efficiency without requesting excessive funding.



STRATEGIC PLANNING

In order to optimize the fleet, we are increasing the central motor pool and decreasing office-assigned vehicles. We are also standardizing the light fleet vehicle purchases to enable multi-use functionality.

Actively Controlling Equipment Costs

Cost Comparison

Using current pricing, we have analyzed the cost to replace all of the department's capitalized equipment when it reaches the end of its depreciable life. The cost increase due to inflation, supply chain disruptions, and rising material costs have created a substantial budget need that the department has worked to reduce through proactive management of our equipment program.

INCREASES TO EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT COST

\$312.6M

Increase in cost from what we originally paid to replace our existing fleet.

ANNUAL IMPACT TO REPLACE EQUIPMENT

\$31.9M
PER YEAR

Budget request needed every year to replace equipment as it reaches the end of its depreciable life.

FUNDING REQUIRED

\$10.1M

Our requested budget increase is \$21.9M less than the funding needed to replace equipment at the end of depreciable life due to proactive equipment management strategies.

	HISTORICAL COSTS	COSTS FOR FY26	INCREASE IN PRICE
Motorized Equipment	\$213.2M	\$374.3M	\$161.0M
Vehicle Attachments	\$116.1M	\$238.5M	\$122.4M
Maintenance Equipment	\$24.9M	\$45.2M	\$20.3M
Communication Equipment	\$23.2M	\$32.1M	\$8.9M
Total Equipment	\$377.4M	\$690.0M	\$312.6M

An increase in funding is essential to avoid higher costs in the future. Here's why:



INFLATION & SUPPLY CHAIN COSTS

The costs of vehicles and parts are rising faster than in previous years. For example, snowplow deliveries have been significantly delayed, and the plows we do receive have come at a higher price. This means that delays in funding will lead to even greater expenses down the road.



EFFICIENCY & PRODUCTIVITY

Newer vehicles reduce the amount of time our mechanics spend on repairs and increase uptime, allowing for more efficient services across the state.



PUBLIC SAFETY

Maintaining a modern fleet ensures that Iowa DOT vehicles remain safe and reliable, which is crucial for protecting both our employees and Iowa's citizens.



FUEL USE REDUCTION

Investing in newer vehicles will also allow us to incorporate more fuel-efficient options, reducing emissions, increasing sustainability, and reducing ongoing fuel costs.

The incremental budget ask of \$10.1M will allow the department to continue to replace the vital equipment needed to successfully construct and maintain the primary road system of Iowa.

DOT equipment is regularly used in public safety operations for emergency and disaster response efforts such as severe flooding, tornadoes, windstorms, and snowstorms.

In the past calendar year, we have provided staff and equipment in response to multiple disaster areas, including the communities affected by flooding in northwest Iowa and to the community of Greenfield following the tornado damage to the city.

Capabilities that the department provides with this equipment in these emergency response situations include debris removal, delivery of critical goods such as drinking water and cots, delivery and supplying of water pumps for flood relief, and clearing blocked roads for first responders.



DOT staff assisting with clearing debris from flooding in northwest Iowa.