

# THE MUNICIPAL

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## Fleet Service & Management



### INSIDE:



Scott County Fleet  
delivers what matters



Fleets during a time  
of shortage



Tulsa rewarded for  
best practices

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# Scott County, Minn., fleet team delivers what matters and drives down costs to taxpayers

By Ed Smith | Agile Fleet, Inc.

**“Delivering what matters” is not just a slogan at Scott County, Minn. It’s a citizen-focused approach to delivering services that leaves you wondering, “Why can’t all government be like this?”**

Troy Beam, fleet and facilities manager, and the team at Scott County are doing remarkable things to manage their fleet and deliver what matters. The results are:

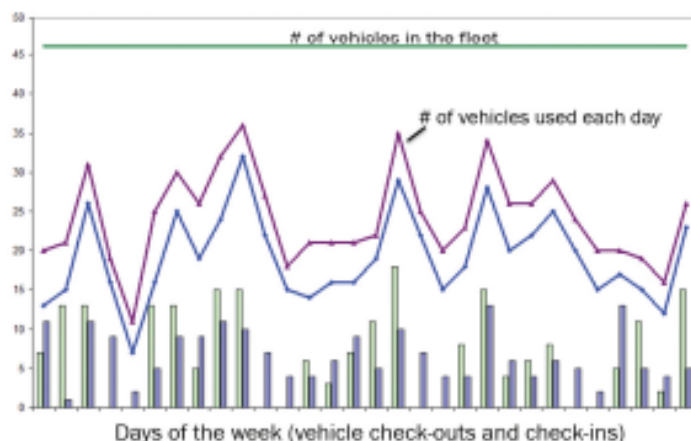
1. Lower fleet costs.
2. Easier access to fleet vehicles for county drivers.
3. An innovative program to provide handicap-accessible vehicles to county residents.

In just the past five years, the county, spanning roughly 365 square miles and having 150,000 residents, has saved over \$1,000,000 for its taxpayers by implementing innovative changes for its fleet. It’s a remarkable success story enabled by solid leadership, easy-to-implement vehicle sharing technology, and the effective use of fleet metrics to drive change.

## Strong leadership, simple policy, big results

Years ago, Scott County’s leadership team formalized a transformational policy for county employees. It seems almost too simple. Thirty words that were memorialized in the county’s fleet policy set in motion changes that ultimately saved the county money and improved services for both employees and citizens. Those 30 words are: “Officials and employees shall always use a county motor pool vehicle and/or ride sharing — when available and determined to be most cost effective — in the performance of their assigned roles.”

The impact since implementing automated vehicle sharing in 2013 to reduce costs has been nothing short of remarkable.



*Utilization data, available for each type of vehicle at each location, helps the fleet team determine their real need for fleet vehicles. (Graph provided)*

A seasoned fleet veteran at Agile Fleet Inc., Ron Katz said that Scott County’s approach is simple yet effective. “Motor pools (aka ‘shared vehicles’) make sense. Historically, it has been common for government employees or departments to get their own assigned vehicles, but that is inefficient due to the low utilization rates of those assigned vehicles. The often-used practice of establishing standard minimum





Scott County leveraged its vehicle reservation system to allow work-from-home staff in rural areas to pick up county-owned vehicles at their local library. Secure key boxes, like the ones shown above, provide 24/7 access to motor pool vehicles throughout the county. (Photos provided)

monthly distance-traveled thresholds to justify assigned vehicles is nearly always ineffective because distance-traveled varies so much by job function and external factors. By focusing on what really matters, the most cost-effective way to provide a vehicle for each trip, Scott County has gotten down to what matters.”

Shared vehicles are typically 35% more cost-effective than reimbursing staff for the use of a personal vehicle or using an outside vehicle rental agency. And, depending upon the job functions involved, shared vehicles can save 80% or more over under-utilized assigned vehicles.

#### Cost-saving vehicle sharing technology

Reliable, easy-to-use technology for providing 24/7 access to motor pool vehicles is the key to widespread adoption of vehicle sharing across Scott County.

Using the FleetCom-  
mander vehicle  
sharing technology,  
employees reserve  
vehicles in advance  
or walk up to a self-

**“Vehicle sharing is here to stay. I honestly don’t know if doing business the old way will ever come back.”**

**- Troy Beam**

service kiosk to access a vehicle at any time. Picking up and returning keys at a self-service kiosk is easy. The experience is very similar to getting a boarding pass from an airport kiosk, yet doesn’t require the driver to remember a confirmation code or a secret PIN. Drivers use their employee badge or standard network login to access the kiosk. Security features ensure keys are handed out to authorized drivers at authorized times.

Scott County’s fleet staff particularly likes the technology. Fleet staff can monitor activity at all the county’s vehicle sharing kiosks from their centralized offices or even work-from-home locations. Notably, they can provide support virtually and continuously monitor utilization using dashboards to ensure enough vehicles are located at the county’s vehicle sharing locations. Staff members proactively move vehicles from site to site if trends in utilization metrics indicate a need.

**“We have moved five vehicles from departments into the general motor pool for better usage by more employees. We also downsized in 2020 and sold five vehicles for about \$6,000 each.”**

**- Aaron Kotilla, Fleet Supervisor**

#### Big fleet changes as a result of the global pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed how fleet services are delivered at Scott County. Many job functions have changed. Tax assessors, inspectors, social services and other workers work online from home rather than in-person. There is only an occasional need for a vehicle. In Scott County’s case, those work-from-home locations are in rural areas far away from their traditional city office location and the fleet vehicles. So how did the county address the need to provide vehicles to staff working from rural home offices and determine who still needed access to vehicles? You guessed it—they moved the fleet vehicles closer to the employees!

In the midst of the pandemic, Beam’s fleet team listened to the needs of county employees. They realized there were concentrated areas of county employees in rural areas. And, conveniently, there were also county-owned public libraries in these areas. So, the fleet services department, in a joint effort with Transit (using grant funding), leveraged its existing FleetCommander vehicle sharing technology and implemented additional self-service kiosks at these library locations. Vehicles were reallocated from the central motor pool locations to the rural locations at the libraries. The result is that employees in rural areas only need to go as far as the local library now to access a county vehicle. No fleet staff is required at the libraries as the solution is all self-service.

Transit expanded the capabilities to allow authorized county residents to access handicap-accessible vehicles from the rural library location. The solution is an easy way to serve the needs of handicap residents in rural areas. Those needs were previously difficult to provide in a responsive, cost-effective way.

#### Cashing in on the county’s efficiencies

Efficiencies introduced by vehicle sharing are welcomed by employees and are paying off in a big way for the county. The need for a vehicle for emergency vaccine response was easily accommodated via the shared pools of vehicles. And, by maximizing utilization of vehicles it already owned, the county has reduced the number of vehicles. This is great news at a time when resale values on used vehicles are at an all-time high. And, by providing access to the lower cost shared vehicles in lieu of paying employees to use their own vehicle, the county has reduced an estimated \$250,000 annually in reimbursements for use of personal vehicles. ■

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