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# Prince George's County Fleet Success



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# An Insider's Look at Prince George's County, Maryland's Fleet Success

County fleet expert and Certified Automotive Fleet Manager (CAFM) Rick Hilmer has worked in county fleet management since 1994. The Prince George's County Fleet Management Division currently oversees 3,500 light vehicles, which include both public safety and public service vehicles.

## Q Give us a brief history of your career.

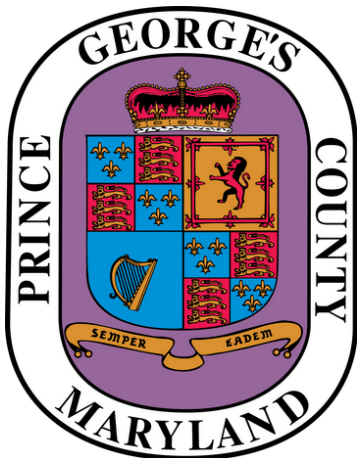
A When I got out of the Marines in 1985, I was hired by Virginia Concrete to run their truck and equipment maintenance shop. In 1994, I came over to Maryland to be the Fleet Manager for the Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation. Although we were Parks and Recreation, we had everything from police cruisers to a light bus fleet to heavy construction and maintenance equipment. In 2005, I became the Chief of Equipment Maintenance for the county's Department of Public Works and Transportation. Finally, I joined the Office of Central Services as the County Fleet Manager in 2007 and have been serving in this capacity to date.



**Rick Hilmer, CAFM**  
Fleet Manager

## Q Tell us about the Prince George's County Fleet and motor pool operations.

A The Fleet Management Division is responsible for approximately 3,500 light vehicles owned by the County. About 2,900 of those are public safety vehicles; Police, Fire, Sheriff, and Corrections. The other 600 are public service vehicles, most of which are assigned. This is the portion of the fleet where we are looking for pooling opportunities. Some of the agencies operate internal pools but Fleet has two pools consisting of 56 vehicles serving over 120 users. Fleet pool vehicles are both on long term as well as daily rentals. FleetCommander allows us to manage the pooled vehicles and ensure accurate tracking, maintenance and billing.



## Q What are the top 5 objections you have heard from people to sharing vehicles?

A The top 5 objections I hear are:

1. "I need my car every day."
2. "I can't afford to have to try to find a car when I need it."
3. "My car is my office."
4. "We don't have enough cars as it is."
5. "No one else will take care of the cars."



**Q How do you answer those objections?**

**A** With facts and data. Not every vehicle can be shared, but you can analyze the data and find the places where they would fit. You have to show people the usage patterns that lend themselves to pooling/sharing options and show agencies where they will save money.

**Q How do you communicate with your customers that sharing vehicles can actually be better than assigned vehicles?**

**A** We showed them the money they would save by not having to pay an annual fee for car ownership. For example, we showed one department that their projected motor pool usage for a year would be covered by the savings generated from just one of the six cars turned in. The rest of the money could be reallocated to other departmental priorities. To show them we were serious, and we were invested, we gave them their money back even though we were halfway through the fiscal year. The other selling factor was that the cars in the pool are a tremendous upgrade over what they had and turned in... newer, better, more functional, more environmentally friendly and more comfortable... all at a lower cost. That kind of deal sells itself. We had to deliver what we promised; better cars at a lower price with a positive customer experience through the reservation / kiosk system. If our performance couldn't match or beat their expectations, it wasn't going to work.

**Q What factors contributed to the decision to create the second motor pool?**

**A** We wanted a signature project to demonstrate fuel and emissions reductions in partnership with the Maryland Energy Administration. We wanted it to be a multi-disciplined approach that integrated fleet reduction, car sharing and electrification, so we created a motor pool which consists of Plug-In Hybrid Electric vehicles shared by multiple agencies all of which are controlled by Agile FleetCommander. We used county and state funds and have implemented a successful project which we believe can be replicated at other sites going forward.

**Q How would you describe the transition to managing multiple sites now that Largo has been open more than a year?**

**A** The biggest concern was geography. We were opening a second site ten miles away from the original site but weren't adding any additional staff to manage it. For the most part, we have been able to manage everything through FleetCommander but do have a backup person trained who is physically closer to the new site and who is occasionally called on to respond to a problem there. The need for him to respond has been minimal.



**Q How has vehicle utilization improved and how much money have you saved?**

**A** The two agencies currently enrolled are each saving \$15,000 - \$20,000 per year, depending on the price of fuel. The new cars are much more efficient and have lower operating costs. We removed 12 underutilized vehicles from the fleet and have been able to pool 31 users to share the 6 cars we put in the pool. We believe the envelope can be pushed a little further on these 6 cars as we have only had several occasions where all of the cars were out at the same time but have yet to turn down a request. If we are able to successfully add another agency to the pool, we'll reduce their owned fleet, add their employees and could add a vehicle or two back to the pool to match the increased demand. That's the beauty of using the FleetCommander system. You can track your usage and make adjustments based on data. Our first few months we were averaging 40 trips a month and now we're up to 80. We have slowly added users as requested.

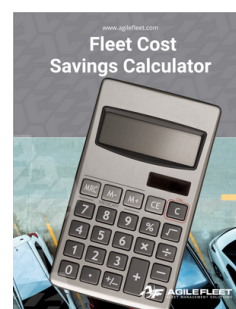
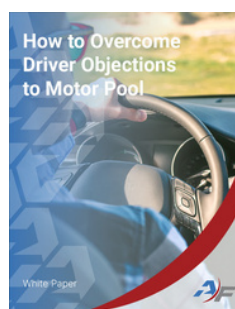
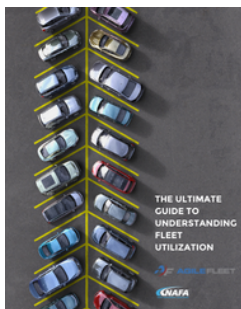
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Rick Hilmer, CAFM

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## Resources for the Fleet Management Community



## Ready for the next step?

Schedule a consultation with our team of fleet experts. We'd love to learn more about your specific needs. We can provide a 10-year fleet savings assessment, provide a demo, and share stories of how we've helped other organizations. Scan the QR code to get started!



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