

## Research Plan: Governments' Challenges with Acquiring Vehicles

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Support:

Deputy Executive Director Approval: Initial: *MMB* Date: *5-16-24*

Executive Director Approval: Initial: *[Signature]* Date: *5/16/24*

### **Purpose**

To study challenges faced by local governments and the state with acquiring vehicles, such as fire trucks, salt trucks, and school buses and how the delivery of public services could be affected.

### **Background**

At the November 2023 Commission meeting, Mayor Bob Rial discussed local governments' challenges with availability and timelines for delivery of government vehicles, particularly large vehicles, like ambulances, fire trucks, and other emergency vehicles. Commission members also noted issues with the purchase of school buses, including their usable life and mandatory replacement schedules. Other members agreed it is an issue and that 12 to 18 months for delivery after ordering certain vehicles is the norm. The Commission approved Mayor Rial's request to study this issue at the January 2024 meeting.

Both local and state government officials interviewed have identified issues with the purchase and delivery of government vehicles such as long delivery times, price changes of the item ordered because of long delays, shortage of vehicles to purchase, and federal regulations that can affect both manufacturing, available supply, and purchases. All these issues can affect the ability of governments to deliver services to their citizens.

Stakeholders said that, when needed vehicles aren't delivered in a timely manner, they must establish contingency plans to still meet the demand for services and acknowledge

that they are having to keep older vehicles on the road longer and rebuild motors in older vehicles to meet demand and needs.

### **Define the Problem**

When both local and state government agencies order vehicles, the actual delivery of the vehicle can be months or years, which potentially creates a barrier to providing critical public services that are reliant on the vehicles, such as emergency response, garbage pickup, and transport of students.

### **Assemble Some Evidence**

- Interview the Commission member who requested the study, Mayor Bob Rial, and other Commission members who expressed interest in the issue.
- Review any relevant legislation and interview the sponsors of the legislation.
- Interview other stakeholders to determine what is driving this issue. These include but are not limited to representatives of
  - Local governments
  - School districts
  - Tennessee Department of Education
  - Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security
  - Tennessee Department of General Services
  - American Public Works Association – Tennessee Chapter
  - Tennessee Association of Ambulance Services
  - National Association of State Procurement Officials
  - County Technical Advisory Service (CTAS)
  - Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS)
  - Development Districts
- Review past legislation meant to address this issue, including committee hearings on those bills and the fiscal notes.
- Review Tennessee’s relevant statutes and regulations.
- Review relevant federal statutes and regulations.

- Review similar laws, regulations, and programs in other states.
- Review relevant literature.
- Gather relevant data sets, including statistics related to the purchase of large government vehicles.
- Review industry groups, such as vehicle dealers.

## Proposed Research Timeline

