

**To the Mayor and Members of the City Council****May 2, 2023**

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SUBJECT: TOWING MANAGEMENT CONTRACT

The purpose of this Informal Report is to provide information about AutoReturn's performance in managing the City's towing program and the process by which we intend to award the next towing management contract.

The City of Fort Worth has experienced extraordinary population growth over the last ten years and this population boom is predicted to continue. Due to this rapid growth, some of our current streets are inadequate to accommodate the daily volume of traffic. Lane closures impact countless drivers every day due to accidents and broken-down vehicles, making it imperative that these obstructions get cleared as quickly as possible. The implementation of a more modern system with the ability to document notes, photographs, and additional information has greatly benefitted the Fort Worth Police Department staff, as well as wrecker companies and the general public.

Prior to implementing AutoReturn, the following towing related challenges created inefficiencies and safety concerns for the Fort Worth Police Department personnel and local residents:

- Long dispatch response times resulting in police officer and citizen safety issues, traffic congestion and economic impact to City and a high number of secondary accidents.
- Burden on police communications having to manage all dispatch requests.
- Lack of public website and 24/7 call center for owners to locate vehicles and understand retrieval process.
- Customers being charged different prices by towing companies, with no mechanism to enforce correct fees or conduct audits.
- Lack of a single technology platform for all city stakeholders and participating towing companies.
- The high cost for the Fort Worth Police Department to manage all of the towing companies.
- The cost to receive 40,000 incoming private property related phone calls per year and process the data.
- High city administrative costs to perform and manage the overall towing function.

Since implementation of the City's current system, we have been able to track the number of tow requests, private property non-consent tows, and repossession tows, all in one system.

Customers can locate their vehicles quickly and find additional information such as storage location, fees owed, and contact numbers. Additionally, the Fort Worth Police Department has dispatched over 101,000 tow trucks and received reporting information on over 164,000 private property non-consent and repossession tows in the City of Fort Worth.

Another benefit is that the current system has reduced burdens on personnel in the FWPD Communications Center by adding a tow request application on our patrol car mobile data computers, by which officers can order their own tow truck without having to go through a dispatcher. Beyond the dispatching efficiencies, we have seen similar reductions for our Data

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Reporting Unit. Prior to the current system, the Data Reporting Unit was responsible for answering calls and completing reports for all non-consent and repossession tows. With the current system in place, the time needed to complete this job task has been reduced by more than 60 percent. The current system is also integrated with the current lien letter system used by the City of Fort Worth, which reduces staff time in processing notices. Most recently, the system was integrated with the City's cashier system (iNovah) which has reduced the need for separate cash register entry.

These technological improvements allow the city to generate efficiencies, improve the experience for the customer, and allow large volumes of data to be pulled for reporting and auditing purposes. This technology also reduces the time it takes for a tow truck to respond to traffic incidents and allows wrecked and disabled vehicles, customers, and first responders to move off the freeways and streets more quickly. Under AutoReturn, the response time for tow trucks to arrive on scene have been reduced from an average of 30-45 minutes to the current average response time of under 14 minutes anywhere in the city.

The Fort Worth Police Department is in the last renewal year of its wrecker contract with AutoReturn. The contract expires on September 30, 2023, with no further options to extend it, and will require a Request for Proposals (RFP) for continued police-initiated towing services. The RFP will follow a timeline that will meet the City's needs and allow for implementation of the selected proposal(s) beginning on October 1, 2023. To meet this deadline, the City of Fort Worth will ideally award the contract by August 2023. The scope of work will include the Fort Worth Police Department and City's goals for the RFP to continue with a more efficient system utilizing modern technology to serve customers effectively and increase efficiencies within the Fort Worth Police Department.

To prepare for the new RFP, there have been several meetings with wrecker companies to provide them opportunities to give input and recommend revisions. Some recommended changes, such as moving all dispatch to "closest to" (proximity) rather than a traditional rotation list have already been implemented. Other recommendations, including modifying allowable tow rates and other allowable fees are currently under review by the City Law Department. Police, Purchasing, and Law are working together to complete an RFP that will encompass an updated scope of work and evaluation factors that will meet the City's needs. This will allow the City to review proposals and award a contract to begin October 1, 2023. We expect to release the RFP in late May or early June.

If you need additional information, please contact Deputy Chief Mark Barthen at 817-392-4121.

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City Manager