

CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE

SPECIAL MEETING

INFRASTRUCTURE & FRANCHISE

Laura Hoffmeister, Chair
Edi Birsan, Committee Member

5:30 p.m., Wednesday, September 9, 2015

**Building D, Permit Center Conference Room
1950 Parkside Drive, Concord**

- A G E N D A -

ROLL CALL

STAFF PRESENT

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WHO ADDRESSED THE COMMITTEE

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

1. **REVIEW** – Findings from use of tow management software. Report by Cheryl Owens, Finance/Business Operations Manager, Police Department.
2. **ADJOURNMENT**

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Distribution: City Council
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Jovan Grogan, Deputy City Manager
Mark Coon, City Attorney
Guy Swanger, Chief of Police
Cheryl Owens, Finance/Business Operations Manager
Administrative Services

**REPORT TO INFRASTRUCTURE AND FRANCHISE COUNCIL
COMMITTEE****TO HONORABLE COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

DATE: September 9, 2015

SUBJECT: REVIEW FINDINGS FROM USE OF TOW MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE**Report in Brief**

This report provides background as well as an update on the vehicle tow management software, AutoReturn. At the Committee meeting, staff will provide an overview of the software and data on its operation in the fiscal years 2013-14 and 2014-15. No action is requested from the Committee.

Background

On November 10, 2011 during the Infrastructure and Franchise Committee meeting, the tow owners, proposed that the City of Concord implement a tow management software program. At the conclusion of that meeting, the Committee members directed staff to continue to work with the tow owners to review their proposed software solution. In September 2012, the City selected AutoReturn to provide to provide tow management software for the Concord Police Department (CPD).

Discussion***1. Rotational Tow Operations***

The Concord Police Department currently has an agreement with six (6) private tow carriers located within the City to provide towing services for all City departments. All six tow operators participate in the City's rotational tow program on a voluntary basis. The involved companies pay the City a \$30 franchise fee on each towed vehicle that is released. The six operator/owners on the Police Department's rotation list are called on a rotating basis for all towing requests by officers. These calls total approximately 2,000 per year. Vehicles that are towed are taken to private storage yards maintained by the respective operators. Tow operators presently receive 100 percent of the revenue generated for each Police Department-requested tow from the registered owner of the towed cars. Currently the tow fee equals \$175 per tow, and the storage fee is \$55 per day. Any vehicle which the vehicle owner chooses not to recover is sold through a lien sale by the tow operator, who receives the proceeds. None of the tow/storage revenues are shared with the City.

2. **Tow Management Software**

On November 29, 2011 the tow owners set-up a demonstration at the CPD of the proposed tow management software (Dispatch and Tracking Solutions – DTS). The meeting attendees included Council Member Helix, the tow owners, and members of Concord and Walnut Creek Police Departments. All were impressed with the software and capabilities. After the initial demonstration, staff had a chance to visit two different law enforcement agencies that are using the DTS software (Fresno Police Department and Sacramento County Sheriff’s Office). Both agencies noted the software improved their ability to track and manage tows. Staff agreed with the tow owners that the use of the DTS solution will allow for greater oversight for all stakeholders as it relates to vehicle tows.

An informal RFP was issued by the CPD in August 2012 with responses received from three companies: AutoReturn, Dispatch and Tracking Solutions (DTS) and Tow Xchange. In September 2012, based upon the results of the informal RFP Police Department Staff selected the vendor “AutoReturn” to provide tow management software which allowed for tracking of all City-requested tows. An assessment of five criteria was utilized to select the winning vendor. The criteria used were corporate experience and ability to perform, references, service manager resume and capabilities, completeness of response and pricing. AutoReturn scored 91 points, DTS scored 75.2 and Tow Xchange scored 30.3.

The AutoReturn software is a web-based application focused on automating the way law enforcement agencies dispatch, oversee and manage tow requests. This software also provides for seamless integration in one easy-to-use system which allows CPD to leverage tow coordination efforts and securely share information with inter-agency departments and rotational tow owners. The software also provides reports that allow the City of Concord to track the time the entire tow process takes to complete. The information provided by these reports enables staff to invoice the franchise fee to each tow owner based upon actual tow information, as well as allows for the evaluation of the franchise fee with actual quantitative data.

The AutoReturn tow management software helps tow owners drive their profitability through seamless integration with CPD and complete dispatch management. AutoReturn also provides the tow owners a powerful tool that enables them to extend consistent, quality-based services to the City of Concord and its citizens. Benefits to the tow owners include simplified and automated dispatch call taking, up to date invoicing and accounting of all rotational tows and a web-based, low cost solution to the fiscal management of rotational tows.

Because AutoReturn is web-based, it provides all hardware and hosting services, including monitoring and backup services. This means no dedicated City IT resources (hardware, software or personnel) are needed to utilize this software. There is no cost to the City of Concord or tow operators for the use of this software. The cost for the use of the software charged by AutoReturn is passed on to the registered owner of the towed vehicle through an administrative software fee of \$10 per tow which was adopted by Council in September 2012.

At the September 9 Franchise and Infrastructure Committee meeting, staff will provide an overview of the AutoReturn software and data on its operation in the fiscal years 2013-14 and 2014-15.

Recommended Action

No action is requested from the Committee.

Prepared by: Cheryl Y. Owens
Finance / Business Operations Mgr., PD

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