

RESOLUTION NUMBER R- **316931**

DATE OF FINAL PASSAGE **SEP 29 2026**

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
SAN DIEGO AMENDING COUNCIL POLICY NO. 500-03
REGARDING POLICE-INITIATED TOWING.

RECITALS

The Council of the City of San Diego (Council) adopts this Resolution based on the following:

A. Council Policy 500-03 (Policy), relating to police-initiated vehicle tows, was last amended in 2012.

B. The San Diego Police Department (SDPD) authorizes the tow of approximately 20,000 vehicles each year from public streets and highways in compliance with the authority granted by the California Vehicle Code and the San Diego Municipal Code.

C. The City of San Diego enters into non-exclusive contracts with multiple qualified tow providers for towing services including towing, impound, storage, release, and disposal services throughout the City, in designated Tow Zones (Towing Program).

D. SDPD is responsible for day-to-day management of the Towing Program, including the dispatch, towing, and impound functions.

E. The Office of the City Auditor (Auditor) conducted an audit of SDPD's Towing Program and reported its findings in the Performance Audit of the City's Towing Program, dated November 2022. The audit found that tows based on expired registration over six months, 72-hour parking violations, and five or more unpaid parking citations were often associated with higher towing and impound fees and are more likely to result in a lien sale. The Auditor labeled these types of tows "Disproportionate Impact Tows," saying they have disproportionate impacts on vulnerable residents and have significant quality of life implications.

F. From Fiscal Year 2017 to Fiscal Year 2022, 31,906 vehicles were sold at a lien sale.

G. Lien sales also have a financial impact on the City. The audit shows that in Fiscal Year 2023, as a result of lien sales, the City had a program deficit of approximately \$1.5 million due to unaccounted labor costs and program costs, including lost revenue from cost recovery fees due to lien sales and waived fees for impounds related to evidence collection.

H. Data collected between January 1, 2024, and October 15, 2024, revealed that 5,423 vehicles were towed for registration which had expired over six months, resulting in 1,337 vehicles sold.

I. Council desires to amend the Policy to recommend an equitable alternative to towing that does not cause disproportionate economic harm to residents.

J. The proposed amendments to the Policy include recommendations for an equitable means to address the disproportionate economic harm from towing vehicles for expired registration over six months by expressing and adopting a policy position that the City issue citations instead of towing vehicles in accordance with the California Vehicle Code and any other applicable federal, state, or local laws.

K. Citations hold residents accountable while minimizing the adverse financial and quality of life impacts from costs related to towing, impounding, and lien sales. The Policy amendments will reduce the City's unrecovered costs from lien sales.

L. Council should continue to consider and recommend other alternatives to balance enforcement, accountability, and fairness to residents who are adversely impacted by towing.

M. Council desires that SDPD report on the performance of the Towing Program at least once every three years to the Public Safety Committee or successor Committee and consider providing an update during the initial year of a new towing contract.

N. The Office of the City Attorney prepared this Resolution based on the information provided by City staff, with the understanding that this information is complete and accurate.

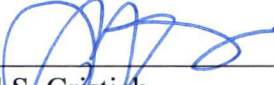
ACTION ITEMS

Be it resolved by the Council of the City of San Diego:

1. The Council of the City of San Diego adopts the Council Policy 500-03, "Police-Initiated Towing" as amended and set forth in Document No. RR- **316931** filed in the Office of the City Clerk.

2. The City Clerk is instructed to update the Council Policy Manual to include the amended Council Policy 500-03.

APPROVED: HEATHER FERBERT, City Attorney

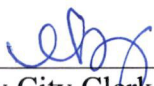
By  _____
Jill S. Cristich
Deputy City Attorney

JSC:amt
December 10, 2025
Or.Dept: PSE
Doc. No. 4273283

I certify that the Council of the City of San Diego adopted this Resolution at a meeting held on

SEP 15 2026

DIANA J.S. FUENTES
City Clerk

By 
Deputy City Clerk

Approved: 9/28/26
(date)


TODD GLORIA, Mayor

Vetoed: _____
(date)

TODD GLORIA, Mayor

Passed by the Council of The City of San Diego on September 15, 2026, by the following vote:

Councilmembers	Yeas	Nays	Not Present	Recused
Joe LaCava	☒	☐	☐	☐
Jennifer Campbell	☐	☒	☐	☐
Stephen Whitburn	☒	☐	☐	☐
Henry L. Foster III	☒	☐	☐	☐
Marni von Wilpert	☐	☐	☒	☐
Kent Lee	☒	☐	☐	☐
Raul A. Campillo	☒	☐	☐	☐
Vivian Moreno	☒	☐	☐	☐
Sean Elo-Rivera	☒	☐	☐	☐

Date of final passage SEP 29 2026.

(Please note: When a resolution is approved by the Mayor, the date of final passage is the date the approved resolution was returned to the Office of the City Clerk.)

AUTHENTICATED BY:

TODD GLORIA

Mayor of The City of San Diego, California.

(Seal)

DIANA J.S. FUENTES

City Clerk of The City of San Diego, California.

By , Deputy

Office of the City Clerk, San Diego, California

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