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COUNCILMEMBER WHITBURN CALLS FOR REVIEW OF SAN DIEGO TOWING PRACTICES

City Council postpones action on towing fees as Whitburn seeks to protect residents.

SAN DIEGO – Councilmember Stephen Whitburn today called for a review of the City’s towing practices, saying many people actually lose their towed vehicle because they can’t pay the hundreds of dollars it costs to get the vehicle back.

“If you can’t afford to get your car out of the impound lot, the impound company will sell it, pay a fee to the City, and keep the profit,” said Councilmember Whitburn at today’s City Council meeting. **“I am concerned about the City being part of a process that leads to low-income residents losing their cars, and private companies profiting from that.”**

When the City of San Diego has a vehicle towed to an impound lot, vehicle owners are required to pay City fees, towing company charges, impound lot charges, outstanding fines and other charges totaling hundreds of dollars before the impound lot will release the vehicle.

City councilmembers unanimously approved Whitburn’s request to postpone a proposed towing fee increase pending a review of the City’s towing and impound contracts before those contracts expire and new contracts are signed later this year.

“I would like to see what protections we can write into those contracts to minimize the number of people who lose their cars to the impound companies,” Councilmember Whitburn said.

The proposed towing fee increase was returned to the council’s Budget and Government Efficiency Committee to allow time for the review.

Councilmember Stephen Whitburn represents San Diego’s Third Council District, which includes the communities of Downtown, Little Italy, Bankers Hill, Mission Hills, Middletown, Hillcrest, University Heights, North Park, Normal Heights, Old Town, South Park, and Golden Hill.

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