



Ordinance Fact Sheet

December 8, 2025

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: City Attorney / City Prosecutor's Department

SUBJECT: **AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF PASADENA AMENDING TITLE 10, CHAPTER 10.46 SECTIONS 10.46.010, 10.46.020, 10.46.050, 10.46.060, 10.46.080, 10.46.090 AND 10.46.120 OF THE PASADENA MUNICIPAL CODE REGARDING THE POLICE TOWING FRANCHISE SYSTEM**

TITLE OF PROPOSED ORDINANCE:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF PASADENA AMENDING TITLE 10, CHAPTER 10.46 SECTIONS 10.46.010, 10.46.020, 10.46.050, 10.46.060, 10.46.080, 10.46.090 AND 10.46.120 OF THE PASADENA MUNICIPAL CODE REGARDING THE POLICE TOWING FRANCHISE SYSTEM

PURPOSE OF THE ORDINANCE:

As directed by the City Council on November 24, 2025, this ordinance amends Chapter 10.46 of the Pasadena Municipal Code ("PMC"), which regulates the City's Police Towing Franchise System, to improve operational efficiency and better serve the needs of the City. Specifically, these amendments change the term of nonexclusive towing franchises granted by the City from one year to three years, amend the definition of "police towing" to include the towing of vehicles as part of the City of Pasadena Department of Transportation's parking enforcement program, incorporate Pasadena Police Department's (PPD) Towing Franchise System Operations Manual into Chapter 10.46, and allow the Pasadena City Council to limit the total number of towing franchises that are granted.

REASONS WHY LEGISLATION IS NEEDED:

In January 1997, the City Council adopted the Police Vehicle Towing Franchise System as described in PMC, Chapter 10.46, which provides standards and

MEETING OF 12/08/2025

AGENDA ITEM NO. 11

procedures for the granting of non-exclusive franchises for providing vehicle towing, vehicle impounds, post collision street sweeps and vehicle storage services to the PPD and the City. This ordinance makes several changes to that program.

First, the ordinance extends the term of each franchise from one year to three years, which allows PPD to avoid annually seeking applications in favor of a three-year franchise award without the option of annual renewals. The general purpose of the amendment is to reduce the amount of time spent on the publication and renewal of applications while still allowing City Council to review the tow franchise system.

Second, the ordinance expands the definition and scope of "police towing" to expressly allow franchisees to provide assistance via the Department of Transportation's parking enforcement operations. At the time Chapter 10.46 was initially adopted, parking enforcement operations were assigned to PPD. Those operations are now handled by the Department of Transportation. This amendment makes clear that the towing providers who are granted a franchise under Chapter 10.46 are also authorized to provide services in connection with parking enforcement operations managed by the Department of Transportation.

Third, the ordinance incorporates PPD's Towing Franchise Operations Manual into Chapter 10.46 of the PMC. The manual serves as a supplemental administrative guide to the City's towing franchise program. When staff seeks applications for non-exclusive tow franchises, the manual is incorporated as part of the franchise application process and outlines specific operational requirements, performance standards, and administrative rules that all franchise operators must meet and/or adhere to in addition to the requirements set forth in the PMC. The manual allows PPD to ensure consistency, accountability, and compliance among franchise tow providers throughout the term of their agreements. Establishing clear operational standards within the manual at the time of application, PPD can effectively manage franchise operations and conduct oversight without requiring additional City Council action during the contract term. Amending the ordinance to include references to the Towing Franchise Operations Manual will provide administrative authority for PPD to implement, update, and enforce the operational requirements necessary to manage franchise agreements approved by the City Council.

Finally, section 10.46.050 is amended to remove language that would restrict the City Council's ability to limit the total number of franchise agreements to one or any other number. This will ensure effective police operations and consistent service delivery by giving PPD discretion to determine and to recommend the appropriate number of tow franchises necessary to meet operational needs. While all applications received will be reviewed and evaluated, this amendment will allow the Council to approve only the number of qualified tow companies required to support citywide operation. Historically, the City has received between three and five tow franchise applications during each cycle and has effectively operated with three franchise tow partners over the past five years. Given that each franchisee pays a substantial franchise fee to the City, expanding the number of tow franchises beyond operational need could create

unnecessary administrative burdens and financial instability for both the franchise operators and the City. Allowing PPD to recommend only the number of tow franchises that align with operational demand provides flexibility while maintaining fairness and fiscal responsibility.

PROGRAMS, DEPARTMENTS OR GROUPS AFFECTED:

The Pasadena Police Department and Department of Transportation (specifically parking enforcement) would both delegate towing services to towing operators who are granted franchises under Chapter 10.46 of the PMC. The Police Department would be responsible for administering the Towing Franchise System.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

On November 24, 2025, the Council found that this ordinance is not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 21065 and within the meaning of Section 15378(b).

FISCAL IMPACT:

The City of Pasadena collects a non-exclusive franchise fee of \$22,500 from each nonexclusive towing franchisee for the cost associated with processing and releasing vehicles for police and parking services. Currently the city has granted three nonexclusive franchise tow agreements and receives \$67,500 annually in franchise fees.

Respectfully submitted,




Michele Beal Bagneris
City Attorney

Prepared by:



Danielle St. Clair
Assistant City Attorney

Concurred by:



MIGUEL MÁRQUEZ
City Manager