

Wilmington, Delaware
April 4, 2024

#0409

Sponsor:

**Council
Member
Darby**

WHEREAS, the Wilmington City Council 2022-2025 Strategic Plan lists “Parking Enforcement” as an essential component of maintaining a “Resident and Visitor Friendly Wilmington”; and

WHEREAS, Wilmington’s parking enforcement officers are authorized to issue tickets, tow, or boot vehicles parked in violation of the City’s parking regulations. Vehicles must park in compliance with all parking meters and signage; and

WHEREAS, constituents have expressed concerns about the parking tickets, as well as the process whereby vehicles are ticketed, towed, or booted; and

WHEREAS, the poverty rate in Wilmington is approximately 24%, and the average income is \$49,354. American adults are spending increasingly more of their income due to inflation, and low-income adults face more hardship paying bills. Fines associated with parking can have a substantial impact on the financial well-being of low-income individuals. According to the Federal Reserve’s annual Economic Well-Being of U.S. Households (SHED), about one-third of Americans lack enough money to cover a \$400 emergency expense. Nearly one in four Americans would have to use credit, turn to family, sell assets, or use predatory loans, such as “pay day loans,” to cover major unexpected costs; and

WHEREAS, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, parking policies were adjusted to account for the extraordinary circumstances associated with the public health emergency. Although conditions have improved, residents continue to face challenges. A comprehensive audit of ticketing and parking enforcement processes would provide the Administration and

relevant departments with crucial information on the impacts of parking enforcement on our residents that can guide policy decision-making going forward; and

WHEREAS, on October 20, 2022, the Fines and Fees Taskforce was created to identify fees and fines that impact the economic well-being of Wilmington residents. It is the responsibility of the Taskforce to gather data, provide findings, and make recommendations on alternative policies for achieving health, safety, and other municipal objectives without contributing to financial hardship for residents; and

WHEREAS, an audit of the costs of tickets, towing, and booting, as well as the processes whereby these enforcement actions are undertaken, is necessary to ensure that penalties levied for parking violations are appropriate to the typical financial capacity of our residents; and

WHEREAS, this Resolution urges the Administration to make the necessary appropriations to the Fiscal Year 2025 budget to engage an external firm to conduct this audit, or, alternatively, to make the necessary financial provisions for the City Auditor to undertake a comprehensive of parking tickets, towing, and the booting processes internally or oversee its production by an external firm, in accordance with Section 2-672 of the City Code.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON that the Wilmington City Council requests that the Administration, the City Auditor, and the City's Audit Review Committee work collaboratively with the relevant departments and external entities to conduct a comprehensive audit of parking tickets, towing, and the booting processes of the City before December 31, 2024.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Wilmington City Council recognizes that both effectiveness and equity play a role in the determination of parking enforcement policy.

Given the impact of the pandemic on parking behavior and individuals' ability to pay fines at their current levels, this Council encourages the Administration and relevant departments to conscientiously assess whether, and how, ticketing, towing, and booting processes should be adapted to fit current circumstances.

Passed by City Council,

ATTEST: _____
City Clerk

SYNOPSIS: The Wilmington City Council 2022-2025 Strategic Plan lists "Parking Enforcement" as an essential component of maintaining a "Resident and Visitor Friendly Wilmington." In furtherance of that goal, this Resolution encourages the Administration and relevant departments to conduct a comprehensive audit of parking tickets, towing, and the booting process before December 31, 2024.