



# CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

## COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

**AGENDA DATE:** August 9, 2016

**TO:** Mayor and Councilmembers

**FROM:** Finance Department

**SUBJECT:** New Online Payment System For Utility Bills

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That Council receive a demonstration of the City's new electronic bill presentment and payment services system for utility bills.

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### **Background**

The Finance Department bills and collects revenue for City water, wastewater, and solid waste services. In 2012, the City implemented the Infinity.Link online payment application and partnered with payment processor TransFirst, Inc., which allowed customers to view and pay their water, wastewater, and solid waste bill online.

While the current payment platform is functional, the City identified several additional features that have become standard in the marketplace—features that our customers have come to expect as standard in an online payment processing application. This includes the following: (1) the ability to accept payment from multiple types of platforms, devices, and web browsers; (2) the ability to pay by either credit card or e-check (also known as Electronic Funds Transfer); (3) the ability to schedule payments in the future, and store bank or credit card information; (4) the ability to pay by text or email; and (5) receiving due date reminders and payment receipts by email or text.

The project team issued a request for proposals (RFP) in March 2015 and unanimously chose Invoice Cloud, Inc., based on cost, level of service and system reliability. In January 2016, Council approved a professional services agreement with Invoice Cloud, Inc., for a term of three years with two optional two-year extensions.

#### **Website Implementation Date**

The Invoice Cloud website for the City went live for all utility customers on August 3, 2016. Users can visit the site to initiate one-time payments or can register on the site in

order to make scheduled payments using a credit card or bank account, to sign up for auto-payments or to sign up for paperless billing. In addition, users will now be able to review their bills and make online payments using most major web browsers and via mobile devices. Beginning on August 3, 2016, all registered users will now receive bill notifications and email payment receipts for any online payments.

The project team will continue to evaluate the platform over the next several months, and will implement any added features that will benefit the City's customers.

**PREPARED BY:** Julie Nemes, Treasury Manager

**SUBMITTED BY:** Robert Samario, Finance Director

**APPROVED BY:** City Administrator's Office