



CITY of CALABASAS

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

DATE: JULY 22, 2021

TO: TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**FROM: ROBERT YALDA, P.E., T.E., PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR/CITY ENGINEER
THOMAS MERICLE, TRAFFIC ENGINEERING SERVICES**

SUBJECT: AUTOMATED LICENCE PLATE RECOGNITION PROGRAM

MEETING

DATE: JULY 27, 2021

BACKGROUND:

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) has proposed a new and innovative program to improve ways of mitigating and solving crime in Calabasas; the use of automated license plate recognition. The city was also approached by Greater Mulwood Homeowners Association about a similar request for them to use on private property. The new system involves the use of automated license plate recognition (ALPR) cameras that would allow law enforcement to be notified of vehicle with a certain license plate number that have been put into the system. The camera system also allows for LASD to go back in time to capture license plate(s) to aid in crime investigation. These types of systems are used at a number of agencies across southern California and have been a successful tool for improving crime reductions.

DISCUSSION:

Automated license plate recognition (ALPR) systems automatically capture vehicles' license plate information via computer processing of a photograph, compare the plate number to one or more law enforcement agency databases (e.g., Stolen Vehicles; Warrants; Terrorism Watch List; Amber Alerts; etc.), and alert law enforcement personnel when the license plate of a vehicle of interest has been recorded. It also stores the photo and associated data for a set period of time (typically 30 days) that allows law enforcement to look back at which vehicles were present by time of day. It automates a tedious, manual process that is difficult for officers to complete, and vastly improves the efficiency and effectiveness of identifying wanted vehicles and persons of interest among the thousands of vehicles driving on our roadways. These systems do not record any video, only single

photograph, license plate number, and certain vehicle characteristics identified by the system. After a period of time the data is overwritten with new data so there is no long term storage unless pulled out of the system for enforcement investigation purposes. LASD has indicated that they intend to use the system for the following improved community policing efforts:

- Receive real time field information of suspect vehicles in the area allowing them to solve crimes more quickly and the potential to prevent crimes.
- Monitor for stolen vehicles.
- Collect license plate information for suspected street racing.

Use of these systems in other communities has been directly responsible for lowering crime in targeted areas. The City of Ventura, which currently has 6 cameras is expanding their deployment to 15 cameras. Ventura Police Commander Rick Murry stated that the installation of ALPR cameras has been one of the “best investments they have made” in recent years. The LASD has prepared a set of operating procedures for use of the system.

Initially, the cameras are being proposed to be installed initially at five locations as follows:

1. Las Virgenes Road at Agoura Road
2. Calabasas Road at Parkway Calabasas
3. Calabasas Road at Old Town Calabasas
4. Mulholland Highway at Old Topanga Canyon Road
5. Park Ora Road at Park Sorrento Road

These locations were selected by LASD because of proximity to vehicles entering the City, and locations of known speeding and illegal street racing.

The City is currently looking at ALPR system from Flock Safety based on a proposal submitted to LASD and provided to the City for consideration. A copy of their proposal to LASD is attached. There is one other system available called Vigilant Systems and is also being used by some agencies in Southern California. However, that system requires a large up-front cost to purchase and install hardware as well as hardwire power supply whereas the Flock Safety system can be installed on standard poles and powered with solar power. In discussions with one agency using the other system (City of Eastvale/Riverside County Sheriff), they are contemplating switching to the Flock Safety system for locations where power is not available and where they are expanding their current system. The Flock Safety system appears to have the following advantages over the Vigilant Systems product:

- In addition to license plates, the machine vision technology can identify vehicle color, type, and make. This will help to further aid enforcement and for evidence during any judicial process.
- Device can capture data over two lanes rather than a single lane, which will reduce the number needed.
- Purchase of system is through a subscription with an annual fee and contract, rather than a large up-front capital cost. Subscription service includes installation, ongoing maintenance, replacement, and upgrades of the equipment and software.

- Solar powered and use of cellular communication allow for placement at locations that do not have existing power from a traffic signal or streetlight or eliminate the need to install an electrical service cabinet or communications network.

LPR systems are used in over 200 agencies in California. The Flock Safety systems are currently being operated in over 70 of those agencies including the following that are local to Calabasas:

- City of Ventura
- City of Port Hueneme
- City of La Canada Flintridge
- City of Glendale
- City of San Marino
- City of Walnut
- City of Rosemead
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The Flock Safety equipment can be mounted to any pole. Typically, they will be mounted to existing City owned traffic signal poles but can also be placed on new poles in areas where there are no traffic signals, but there is a need for the system. They are fairly small and should blend into the other equipment on the signal pole. The Vigilant Systems product requires a power feed and cameras mounted to the traffic signal mast arm as shown below.

This picture shows a Flock camera and solar panel system mounted to a traffic signal pole. The camera is hidden in the shadow of the solar panel.



In order for the City to implement an Automated License Plate Reader program the following steps will need to take place:

1. Prepare and adopt a policy.
2. Verify initial locations
3. Prepare and approve a contract with Flock Safety
4. Install and test field devices
5. Set up back-end system access and data storage
6. Train City and LASD staff

Attached is a copy of the current draft of a City ALPR policy. This policy is required in order for the city to comply with Civil Code § 1798.90.5 et seq.

FISCAL IMPACTS:

Adoption of an ALPR program and policy does not have any direct fiscal impacts. However, implementation of the program will have costs associated with initial placement, ongoing licensing fees for maintenance and operations, as well as City/LASD staffing costs. Estimated startup and ongoing costs of the two systems are:

| Name | Startup Costs (estimated) | Ongoing Fees/Year |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Flock Safety | \$1,250 | \$12,500 |
| Vigilant Solutions | \$300,000 | \$2,800 |

REQUESTED ACTION:

Staff recommends that the Traffic and Transportation Commission review the proposed ALPR program and implementation as well as the attachments, provide comments, and make a recommendation to the City Council for approval.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A - City's Draft Proposed ALPR Policy

Attachment B - Flock Safety Proposal to LASD