



CITY of CALABASAS
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

DATE: OCTOBER 29, 2021

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND COUNCILMEMBERS

FROM: ROBERT YALDA, PE, TE, PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR/CITY ENGINEER
JOHN BINGHAM, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES MANAGER
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SUBJECT: CITY COUNCIL CONSIDERATION OF AN AUTOMATED LICENSE PLATE
RECOGNITION (ALPR) PROGRAM

MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 10, 2021

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council approve the following:

1. ALPR City Policy
2. Agreement with Flock Safety

BACKGROUND:

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) has proposed a new and innovative program to improve ways of mitigating and solving crime through 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/ANALYSIS:

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 a license plate of a vehicle in the database has been identified. It stores 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 to assist with leads in an investigation. 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 such as color and type of vehicle. After 30 days the data is overwritten with new data so there is no long-term storage unless pulled out of the system for enforcement investigation purposes. Any photographic and meta data saved by LASD will be held for a period of 2-years for these 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. For instance, the City of Ventura, which currently has 6 cameras has decided to expand their deployment to 15 cameras because of the success of the program. 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 cameras system has the following protocols to protect privacy:

- Does not take photographs of drivers or passengers
- Does not store video
- Data is not compiled and used or sold to companies for advertising or tracking
- Access to any data collected from the public right-of-way is restricted to law enforcement agencies only and can only be used for official law enforcement purposes

Initially, the license plate recognition system is being proposed to be installed initially at five locations as recommended by LASD 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 at Park Sorrento

These locations were selected by LASD because of proximity to gateway areas where vehicles are entering the City, and locations of known speeding and illegal street racing. They also are spread across the City to provide broad coverage.

The City is currently looking at ALPR system from Flock Safety based on a proposal submitted to LASD and additional information provided to the City for consideration. A copy of their proposal to LASD is attached. The Flock Safety system can be installed on standard traffic sign type poles and powered with solar power. The Flock Safety system has the following characteristics supporting the recommendation to use their system:

- 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 which reduces 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.
- The cameras are solar powered and use cellular communication which 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 in our region:

- City of Malibu (recently approved a contract, but not yet installed)
- 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

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.

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.

The attached agreement provides for the initial installation at the five (5) locations listed above as well as annual operational costs for a period of one year. The agreement allows the City to authorize an extension of time to continue the agreement and allows for a five calendar day termination by the City or thirty-day termination by Flock Safety. Annually, prior to the termination date, the City will collaborate with LASD to review an annual report on the program and will make a recommendation on extension of the agreement for an additional year.



Attached is a City ALPR policy for City Council approval. This policy is required in order for the city to comply with Civil Code § 1798.90.5 et seq. This policy was prepared by the City Attorney for consideration. It provides policy direction for the administration of the program, operating procedures, data collection and storage, accountability, allowed use of data, and training. The policy states that the City Manager, or their designee, and authorized representatives of the Sheriff's Department are the only authorized users of the City's ALPR system.

The LASD has also prepared a set of operating procedures for use of the system. They are already using these procedures for installation of the Flock Safety system in other agencies they serve.

The proposed ALPR City Policy and Flock Safety proposal were reviewed by both the Public Safety Commission and Traffic and Transportation Commission. Both commissions unanimously recommended both the policy and a contract with Flock Safety for implementation be forwarded to the City Council for consideration.

FISCAL IMPACT/SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Adoption of the ALPR Policy itself does not have any direct fiscal impacts. However, implementation of the program through approval of an agreement with Flock Safety will have costs associated with initial placement, ongoing licensing fees for maintenance and operations, as well as City staffing costs. Estimated startup and ongoing costs related to the Flock Safety agreement is:

Name	Installation Cost	Ongoing Fees/Year
Per location	\$250	\$2,500
Initial 5 locations	\$1,250	\$12,500

The initial term of the Agreement would be for one year and the term renews every year unless terminated. If the program is successful and the City decides to add more locations the same per location fees would apply. The total cost of the initial agreement will have a maximum not to exceed fee of \$13,750 per year plus a \$1,250 contingency for a total budget need of \$15,000.

Funding for this agreement would be from the 10-134-5252-00 account.

REQUESTED ACTION:

Staff recommends that the City Council review and approve the proposed ALPR City Policy and Sole Source Agreement with Flock Safety.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A: Flock Safety Proposal to LASD
- B: Draft Proposed ALPR Policy
- C: Proposed Flock Safety Agreement
- D: PowerPoint Presentation