

**City Council Agenda
September 20, 2017**

Date: September 6, 2017
To: Mayor and City Council
From: Manjit Sappal, Police Chief
Subject: Automated License Plate Reader initiative for education and public comment on the implementation of the program

Recommendation

In accordance with Senate Bill 34, staff recommends that the City Council receive this report on the police department's Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) program and allow the public the opportunity to comment and ask questions.

Background

On January 1, 2016, Senate Bill 34 went into effect which relates to License Plate Recognition (LPR) technology. SB 34 requires that a public agency operating an LPR system provide for a transparent process and maintain a usage and privacy policy that includes reasonable security procedures and practices to protect LPR information. Martinez Police Department Policy 439, Automated License Plate Readers, expressly states how and when any data obtained through the LPR may be accessed, retrieved, shared, used and stored. This policy will be accessible to the public on the City website prior to deployment. Furthermore, the LPR data will also be housed in ARIES. ARIES is the Countywide database that ties law enforcement information on offenders, vehicles, and police contacts from each police agency in this County. The system also integrates with the Courts to streamline document sharing on probable cause declarations.

The law also states that a public agency that operates or intends to operate an LPR system shall provide an opportunity for public comment at a regularly scheduled public meeting of the governing body of the public agency. This requirement is met by giving the public the opportunity to provide comment in conjunction with this report.

Like many police departments across the United States, the Martinez Police Department has explored the advantages of Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR) equipment to assist with the location of stolen or wanted vehicles. ALPR technology works by capturing digital images of license plates on vehicles. These images will be acquired by both fixed equipment (Alhambra Avenue at Walnut Street) and mobile equipment mounted on two patrol vehicles. They will only scan license plates in public view. The ALPR technology, also known as License Plate Recognition (LPR), allows for the automated detection of license plates. It will be used by the

Martinez Police Department to convert data associated with vehicle license plates for official law enforcement purposes, including identifying stolen or wanted vehicles, stolen license plates, AMBER Alerts and missing persons. It may also be used to gather information related to active warrants, issues impacting homeland security, suspect interdiction, and stolen property recovery. LPR software reads the characters on the plate and attaches the date, time and location for the photograph. Officers in the field are then notified if a vehicle has been identified as stolen or wanted.

The City of Martinez, as well as all other Contra Costa County agencies, have seen a drastic increase in the thefts of vehicles. In the city of Martinez, we have seen Auto Theft increase by 14% from 2015 to 2014 and by 47% from 2016 to 2015.

LPR is an effective way of incorporating technology to assist in the recovery of stolen vehicles and apprehension of suspects. It is not uncommon for auto thieves to use stolen cars to case neighborhoods to steal another car. LPR technology would allow the police department to detect the stolen cars to allow for apprehension and recovery of the property. However, LPR technology has many additional benefits to assist in the reduction of crime. All captured license plate data is housed in a searchable database that may be used by investigative staff to develop leads. Comparing multiple crime scenes for a common vehicle, looking for a particular make and model vehicle as reported by eyewitnesses, or looking at prior locations of a known vehicle of interest are all useful investigative applications of LPR. LPR has been endorsed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police and has been useful in solving thousands of crimes across the United States to include residential burglaries, homicides, rapes, narcotics trafficking, kidnappings, identify theft and acts of terrorism. Several cities in Contra Costa County have been using ALPR systems with great success. Cities such as Pleasant Hill, Richmond, San Pablo, and Danville have integrated these systems to enhance community safety. Leveraging this technology allows for greater efficiency, improves officer safety, and provides an advantage in the ability to prevent and solve crime.

All ALPR data downloaded on a secure server in Virginia will be stored for a minimum of one year (Government Code § 34090.6) and in accordance with the established records retention schedule. Thereafter, ALPR data should be purged unless it has become, or it is reasonable to believe it will become, evidence in a criminal or civil action or, is subject to a discovery request or, other lawful action to produce records. In those circumstances, the applicable data should be downloaded from the server onto portable media and booked into evidence. The City will not sell, share, or transfer any information obtained by the ALPR system, except to another public agency as permitted by law. Only credentialed law enforcement officers with a valid Originating Agency Identifier (ORI) number issued by the Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) may access the data on the hosted server.

Fiscal Impact

The cost of the system is \$97,375, but there is no fiscal impact to the City as the Martinez Police Department received Supplemental Law Enforcement Funding that can

be applied to the cost of this program. Considering the project is cost neutral, we will look to expanding the system as more funding becomes available.

APPROVED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'BKilger', is written over a light gray rectangular background.

Brad Kilger, City Manager