



Agenda Report

DATE: JUNE 17, 2025

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: POLICE DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION OF THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A TWO-YEAR AUTOMATED LICENSE PLATE READER CAMERAS SUBSCRIPTION AGREEMENT WITH FLOCK SAFETY

STATEMENT OF ISSUE:

The City of Walnut Creek's Police Department (WCPD) requests to replace and enhance the existing Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) cameras throughout the city by entering into a two-year ALPR cameras subscription agreement with Flock Safety.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Authorize the City Manager to enter into a two-year subscription agreement with Flock Safety to replace and expand the City's existing Vigilant Solutions ALPR cameras with Flock Safety ALPR cameras, for an amount not-to-exceed \$161,600.

DISCUSSION:

Background

The City of Walnut Creek currently has Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) cameras strategically placed throughout the city. However, these cameras are outdated and in need of replacement.

ALPR cameras enhance the effectiveness of police department personnel by providing real-time alerts when a wanted vehicle enters an area monitored by the system. These cameras capture still images of the rear of vehicles, recording key identifying features such as make, model, color, and license plate. All captured images are stored securely in encrypted cloud storage for 30 days before being automatically deleted and rendered unrecoverable.

The system operates by checking every license plate scanned against an actively maintained "hot list", which includes stolen vehicles and vehicles associated with crimes, missing persons, or

Amber Alerts. This list is sourced from the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) and local entries approved by a department supervisor. When a match is detected, the system alerts dispatch and officers with the vehicle's information and location. It's important to note that the ALPR system does not check license plates against DMV records—only against the hot list. Following a crime, officers and investigators can use the ALPR system to search for vehicles by specific license plates, color, make, model, or other distinguishing characteristics to develop investigative leads. The system does not identify suspects; rather, it assists investigators in focusing efforts on vehicles potentially involved in criminal activity.

Proposed ALPR Camera Subscription Agreement

In late 2024, the city conducted a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process to explore options for updating and expanding the existing ALPR system. As a result of this process, staff recommend transitioning to a new vendor, Flock Safety. This transition will bring a significant technological upgrade. The new ALPR system will require fewer cameras overall, while increasing coverage through strategic placement at new locations across the city.

Flock's ALPR system captures vehicle information from public roadways. Flock's technology allows officers to search for wanted vehicles based on unique vehicle criteria, time, and location, as well as vehicle details including make, model, license plate number, top racks, back racks, and bumper stickers – providing objective, investigative evidence focused on vehicles, not people.

Only authorized WCPD personnel will have access to the system, and each user must log in with personalized credentials. Every search must include a justification, which creates a comprehensive audit trail. This accountability is supported by robust administrative oversight. To ensure data security, Flock employs end-to-end encrypted cloud storage and other advanced protective measures.

Flock cameras have been proven effective in reducing crime and assisting law enforcement investigations. In accordance with California law, data collected by Flock may not be shared solely for immigration enforcement purposes and is automatically purged after 30 days.

If approved by the City Council, the city would work with Flock Safety to install 22 fixed ALPR cameras in strategic locations that provide comprehensive cityside coverage and support business and residential communities. In addition to replacing fixed cameras at key intersections, WCPD would equip two existing radar message board trailers with ALPR cameras. By attaching ALPR cameras to these mobile units, the department can strategically deploy them in high-crime areas or areas experiencing increased vehicle-related incidents. This dual-purpose setup not only expands surveillance capabilities but also serves as a visible deterrent to traffic violations, particularly speeding.

The transition to Flock ALPR cameras brings numerous advantages over the current system. Flock utilizes high-definition cameras and advanced image processing to capture vehicle data more accurately. For example, the current system cannot read legacy plates, motorcycle plates, or temporary paper plates, while Flock's system can. Additionally, Flock cameras can monitor multiple lanes simultaneously, reducing the number of cameras needed per location.

The cloud-based Flock platform allows for instant data access and streamlined analytics, fostering easier data management and improved collaboration among law enforcement agencies. Several neighboring jurisdictions within Contra Costa County already contract with Flock, which facilitates regional cooperation.

The Flock system also includes a subscription-based service model in which the cameras are owned and maintained by Flock, increasing reliability while reducing repair costs and downtime. The proposed contract covers all maintenance and repair services, which are performed directly by Flock. In contrast, the City's current vendor provides limited support, and the City bears responsibility for maintenance and repairs since it owns the equipment.

Flock's ALPR system offers scalability and flexibility, allowing for quick deployment or expansion to meet the City's evolving needs. Cameras can be installed virtually anywhere that receives at least four hours of sunlight per day, thanks to the camera's solar-powered capability. This flexibility enhances the City's ability to monitor additional locations as needed.

The proposal was reviewed and approved by the City's Camera Systems Oversight Committee prior to submission to Council.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS:

The project includes the installation of 22 fixed ALPR cameras and 2 Trailer ALPR cameras for 24 months at a cost not exceeding \$161,600, which includes installation, lease, and subscription fees.

The City Council previously appropriated \$200,000 within the General Fund for the installation of ALPR cameras, which would be used to fund the proposed agreement. If the agreement were to be extended at the end of the two years, existing ongoing funding allocated for security cameras in the General Fund would be used for the contract renewal (annual estimated cost of \$100,000), subject to City Council approval.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION:

The City Council could elect to not authorize the City Manager to enter into the agreement and direct staff to pursue alternate solutions. This will delay the replacement of the outdated ALPR system and impact WCPD's law enforcement investigative capabilities.

DOCUMENTS:

Attachment: Flock Safety Agreement

CITY COUNCIL ACTION RECOMMENDED:

Move to authorize the City Manager to enter into a two-year subscription agreement with Flock Safety to replace and expand the City's existing Vigilant Solutions ALPR cameras with Flock Safety ALPR cameras, for an amount not-to-exceed \$161,600.

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