



Agenda Report

MEETING DATE: Tuesday, May 23, 2023

TO: City Council

FROM: POLICE CHIEF ZAMORA
POLICE CAPTAIN THUL

THROUGH: CITY MANAGER MENDEZ

SUBJECT: LEASE OF AUTOMATED LICENSE PLATE READER (ALPR)
CAMERAS FROM FLOCK GROUP, INC.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Approve a Resolution authorizing the execution of a 24-month Master Services Agreement for the lease of twenty (20) Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) Cameras from Flock Group, Inc. (Flock) with an amount not to exceed \$140,000.

BACKGROUND:

Cameras and Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) technology have been used by police agencies to help solve crimes, especially those where an automobile has been used. ALPR technology has continued to evolve and has become less cost prohibitive. Traditional ALPR systems included expensive fixed camera locations or mobile devices mounted in patrol cars.

Currently, still images and video from public and private security systems are critical tools in investigating and gathering information about crime incidents. Our police officers often make multiple visits to businesses and residences after an incident, particularly a violent crime, in search of camera images or video that will help identify suspect vehicles, suspects, and other elements of the crime.

DISCUSSION:

The Flock Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) System is a deployment of cameras throughout an area to provide greater coverage and more detailed information for law enforcement. The Flock Agreement includes 20 cameras which can be spread throughout the city. Flock cameras capture date, time, location, license plates, vehicle details, as well as other objects.

There are key differences between Flock and other ALPR companies. Most notably, they are the only company that leases ALPR services and all system maintenance is covered

by Flock. Another difference is that these cameras capture motion of objects instead of just license plate information.

Additional benefits of Flock include a two-year warranty, an annual flat rate lease per camera of \$3,000, wireless capability, and the option for solar or direct power. This system is Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) compliant, cloud-based hosting, unlimited user licenses, ongoing software enhancements, camera setup, mounting, shipping, handling, and a cellular connection. Lastly, this lease program prevents the City from being burdened with maintaining costly equipment at the end of the agreement, which could require replacement and additional costs.

Since Flock is the sole manufacturer and developer of the Flock Safety Camera, and they are the only vendor who leases ALPR cameras, there are no local vendors available to provide this service.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS:

There are privacy concerns regarding the use of data collected by ALPR systems. These concerns were evaluated in a 2020 audit of four California law enforcement agencies; Fresno Police Department, Los Angeles Police Department, Marin County Sheriff's Office, and Sacramento County Sheriff's Office. The audit was conducted by the California State Auditor. The audit found that having clear guidelines on how ALPR data is used, it will better protect the privacy of residents.

With this said, the Watsonville Police Department created Policy Section 471 on Automated License Plate Readers. This policy includes a requirement to conduct an annual audit, lists restrictions on the release of the data, and requires training for officers in the use of the ALPR system. Section 471.8(c) states that "The Watsonville Police Department does not permit the sharing of ALPR data gathered by the City or its contractors/subcontractors for purpose of federal immigration enforcement, pursuant to the California Values Act (Government Code §7282.5; Government Code §7284.2 et seq.)—these federal immigration agencies include Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Patrol (CPB)." ¹

STRATEGIC PLAN:

The recommended action supports the Council's objective of 6-Public Safety.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

If approved, the twenty (20) Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) Cameras will be leased in an amount not to exceed \$140,000. Measure Y funds have been set aside to support this project.

¹ The California Values Act (SB 54, effective January 1, 2018) ensures that no state and local resources are used to assist federal immigration enforcement; the Act prohibits local law enforcement agencies from using money or personnel to investigate, interrogate, detain, detect, or arrest persons for immigration enforcement purposes and proscribes other activities or conduct in connection with immigration enforcement by local law enforcement agencies.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION:

The Council may choose to not approve the agreement. However, the Watsonville Police Department will not have its own camera technology to assist with solving crimes throughout the city.

ATTACHMENTS AND/OR REFERENCES (If any):

1. Sole Source Letter
2. Draft WPD Policy Section 471