



Bristol Police Department

395 METACOM AVENUE ◊ BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND 02809
TELEPHONE (401) 253-6900



KEVIN M. LYNCH
Chief of Police

August 21, 2024

Steven Contente | Town Administrator
Town of Bristol, Rhode Island
10 Court Street Bristol, RI 02809

RE: Flock (ALPR) Cameras - Town of Bristol Pilot Program

Mr. Administrator,

The following is a review of the pilot program regarding the placement of Flock (ALPR) in the Town of Bristol cameras near the approach to the Mt Hope Bridge as presented to Town Council on 5/11/22. The initial pilot program was funded by EBCAP and the Matthew Patton Foundation as a suicide prevention and harm reduction effort addressing the rates of suicide utilizing the Mt Hope Bridge, and allowed for use of the system by the Bristol Police Department for all lawful purposes permitted withing the accompanying General Order (*G.O. 300.25*)

On 11/14/21 this agency sought funding for a flock camera pilot program and acquired such from the Bristol HEZ suicide prevention group (*specifically from partners EBCAP and the Matthew Patton Foundation*) for four cameras to be stationed-two on the Bristol and two on the Portsmouth sides of the Mt Hope Bridge to be used principally in response to Bridge Suicide and for lawful police purposes outside the scope of suicide prevention. The four cameras were eventually slated to be installed on the Bristol side of the Mt Hope Bridge after Portsmouth reversed their initial decision to support the program. EBCAP honored their initial commitment and provided \$8250.00 in funding and the Matthew Patton Foundation provided \$2750.00 in funding to fully fund the pilot program for one year and on 9/7/22 Flock provided the installation plan and began the permitting process.

Due to RIDOT permitting issues, site survey issues, and issues in Flock distribution, the cameras were not fully permitted and ready for installation until 9/7/23, which applied the funding and ensured program operation through 9/24. Following installation, the Town posted the Flock Policy, information, and relevant information as agreed upon with the Town council and memorialized in department policy on its transparency page on the Town Website <https://www.bristolri.gov/360/Transparency-Accountability> .

To date, all supervisors and investigators have been trained on the system and different tiers of access were created for supervisors, and detectives. In practice the system has been seen to be much more useful as an investigatory tool than a proactive policing tool.

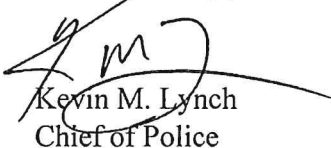
The previous funding sources have been asked if they would help fund additional years of the program, though continued funding and that does not seem likely as the system has not been effective in that aspect. Note: Present funding will expire in September 2024. It appears that the cameras are much more effective as an investigative tool than they are as a suicide prevention tool or a proactive patrol tool. According to Flock our subscription will end at the end of September and the Annual cost to the Town of Bristol to continue the program with four cameras will be approximately \$10,000.00 annually. The cost to move two cameras would be \$750.00 each camera.

Estimated costs for October 2024 would be **\$11,500.00**.

Conclusion:

Based on the lack of outside funding and the current placement of the cameras I feel that the pilot program should not become a permanent tool for the Bristol Police Department. I remain confident that our personnel will remain vigilant with ancillary resources to deliver desired outcomes of service and 21st excellence with public safety. During the initial council presentation my office agreed to publicly notice any change/modification to the program, and it is my recommendation to discontinue the program once our 1-year pilot concludes. Once the council approves this recommendation we will begin to dismantle the program.

Yours in Safety,


Kevin M. Lynch
Chief of Police

concur
MC 9-11-24
STEVEN CONTENTE
Town Administrator