

LEGAL NOTICE
TOWN OF BRISTOL
PROPOSED ORDINANCE
No. 2026-3

AN ORDINANCE IN AMENDMENT TO
THE ORDINANCES OF THE TOWN OF BRISTOL

IT IS HEREBY ORDAINED by the Town Council of Bristol, Rhode Island, that Chapter 21, Police, Article I, In General, is hereby amended to add section 21-11 to read as follows:

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Sec. 21-11. – Regulations governing the use of Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) technology (Flock cameras).

(a) Purpose.

The purpose of this section is to regulate the access to and use of Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) technology by the Bristol Police Department in a manner that enhances public safety while protecting individual privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties. This section is intended to ensure consistency with Rhode Island State Police policy, applicable memoranda of understanding, and Bristol Police Department General Orders governing ALPR use, while preserving Town Council oversight and control.

(b) Definitions.

For the purposes of this section, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

1. **Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR)** – An electronic system, including the Flock camera system, capable of capturing images of license plates or vehicles in public view and converting such images into electronically readable data for legitimate law enforcement or public safety purposes. ALPR does not include devices used solely for toll collection, traffic signal enforcement, speed enforcement, or traffic flow analysis.
2. **ALPR Data** – Any data generated or obtained through the operation of an ALPR system, including detections, images, metadata, hot list alerts, audit logs, and search records.
3. **Flock Camera System** – The ALPR system provided by Flock Safety, Inc., owned and managed by the Rhode Island State Police and made available to the Town of Bristol pursuant to a memorandum of understanding.
4. **Valid Law Enforcement Purpose** – A purpose consistent with the lawful duties of a law enforcement agency, including criminal investigations; locating stolen vehicles, missing

persons, or wanted individuals; protection of critical infrastructure; or other public safety functions, while respecting constitutional rights.

(c) Ownership and system control.

1. All Flock ALPR cameras and all ALPR data collected through such cameras are owned by and remain the property of the Rhode Island State Police.
2. Access to the Flock Camera System by the Bristol Police Department is granted solely at the discretion of the Rhode Island State Police and may be revoked at any time, with or without cause.
3. The Rhode Island State Police retain the right to audit all access logs, user activity, and data usage associated with Bristol Police Department access to the Flock Camera System.

(d) Authorized use.

1. ALPR technology may be accessed or used by the Bristol Police Department solely for valid law enforcement and public safety purposes, as approved by the Chief of Police and consistent with:
 - a. This section;
 - b. Rhode Island State Police ALPR policy;
 - c. Any applicable memorandum of understanding; and
 - d. Bristol Police Department General Orders.
2. ALPR technology shall not be used for traffic violations, civil infractions, parking enforcement, or administrative purposes unrelated to public safety.
3. Every ALPR search or detection browsing inquiry shall be documented with an associated Bristol Police Department case number or incident number and/or a documented reason for the inquiry.
4. ALPR technology shall initially be limited to the installation of one Flock Camera System, provided that the number Flock Camera Systems installed may be increased only with an authorizing resolution from the Town Council.

(e) Prohibited uses.

ALPR technology shall not be used:

1. In conjunction with facial recognition, biometric identification, or similar surveillance technologies;
2. To intentionally identify or record the occupants of motor vehicles, pedestrians, or passersby;
3. To capture or record audio;

4. For harassment, intimidation, or personal use;
5. Based solely on a person's race, color, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, political affiliation, age, disability, or any other classification protected by law;
6. In a manner that infringes upon rights protected by the First Amendment;
7. For the purpose of enforcing federal civil immigration law or determining an individual's immigration status; or
8. Without proper authorization and documentation required by this section and departmental policy.

(f) Access and credentials.

1. Access to the Flock Camera System shall be limited to the Chief of Police and such designee(s) as authorized by the Rhode Island State Police.
2. User credentials shall not be shared and shall be subject to audit and revocation.
3. Department members shall not permit unauthorized persons to access ALPR equipment or data.

(g) Data retention and security.

1. ALPR data shall be retained for no longer than thirty (30) days, unless the data has become or is reasonably anticipated to become evidence in a criminal investigation or prosecution.
2. All retained data shall be stored and protected in accordance with Rhode Island State Police policy, the Rhode Island Secretary of State Records Retention Schedule, and applicable law.
3. The Bristol Police Department shall employ reasonable administrative, technical, and physical safeguards to protect ALPR data from unauthorized access or disclosure.

(h) Data sharing restrictions.

1. ALPR data shall not be sold, shared, disseminated, forwarded, or otherwise disclosed to any third party, including:
 - a. Municipal, state, or federal agencies that have not entered into a substantially similar memorandum of understanding with the Rhode Island State Police;
 - b. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement or any agency seeking data for civil immigration enforcement; or
 - c. Private organizations, entities, or individuals.

2. Any unauthorized disclosure or misuse of ALPR data shall result in immediate revocation of access privileges and may subject the individual to administrative discipline, civil liability, and/or criminal prosecution.

(i) Audits and oversight.

1. Use of the ALPR system by the Bristol Police Department shall be subject to audits conducted by the Rhode Island State Police and/or the Rhode Island Department of Public Safety.
2. The Chief of Police or designee shall ensure full cooperation with any audit and shall maintain documentation of audit results and corrective actions, if any.
3. The Bristol Police Department shall conduct quarterly internal audits. The Chief of Police shall provide the Town Council with quarterly written summaries confirming that required audits were conducted and certifying compliance, along with any aggregated, nonidentifying information as permitted.

(j) Policy compliance and non-alteration.

1. The Bristol Police Department shall maintain a General Order governing ALPR use consistent with this section, Rhode Island State Police policy, and applicable memoranda of understanding. Final execution of a memorandum of understanding and all related policies shall be subject to review and written certification by the Town Solicitor confirming compliance with applicable state law and policy requirements.
2. None of the procedures, limitations, safeguards, or prohibitions set forth in this section may be altered, waived, expanded, or reduced by departmental policy, administrative action, memorandum, or agreement.
3. Any modification to the requirements of this section shall require adoption of an ordinance amendment approved by the Town Council.

(k) Sunset, review, and Council opt-out.

1. This section shall sunset and be of no further force or effect eighteen (18) months after the date of passage, unless expressly extended or reenacted by ordinance adopted by the Town Council.
2. Within one (1) year of the effective date of this section, the Town Council shall conduct a public review of the Bristol Police Department's use of ALPR technology to determine whether such use should continue.
3. ALPR technology shall not be used by the Bristol Police Department beyond eighteen (18) months from the date of passage without the Town Council's explicit approval by ordinance.

4. The Town Council may, at any time and for any reason, opt the Town of Bristol out of participation in the use of Flock ALPR technology by resolution or ordinance, and such opt-out shall require immediate cessation of use.

(l) Enforcement and penalties.

1. Any person who violates this section shall be subject to a civil penalty of not more than five hundred dollars (\$500.00) per violation, in addition to any other remedies available under law.
2. Each unauthorized access, search, disclosure, or use of ALPR data shall constitute a separate violation.
3. The penalties set forth herein shall be in addition to, and not in lieu of, any administrative discipline, civil liability, or criminal prosecution authorized by law.

(m) Severability.

If any provision of this section is held invalid or unenforceable, such invalidity shall not affect the remaining provisions, which shall remain in full force and effect.

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This ordinance shall take effect upon passage.

The Town Council will be in session in the Town Hall, Council Chambers, on March 11, 2026. If remonstrance in the meantime, a petition bearing the valid signatures of at least twenty (20) qualified voters must be filed with the Town Clerk requesting a Public Hearing, such hearing must be held before final action may be taken on said ordinance.

By Order of the Town Council

Melissa Cordeiro
COUNCIL CLERK

March 5, 2026