



STAFF REPORT
7/26/2023

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Randy Vasquez, Lieutenant

SUBJECT: Authorize the Use and Purchase Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) Technology

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that City Council to take the following actions:

- 1) Authorize the use of Automated License Plate Readers within the City of Coachella, as prescribed pursuant to Senate Bill 34.
- 2) Approve the procurement of 70 ALPR cameras and authorize the City Manager to execute the attached Government Agency Customer Agreement for the amount of \$234,500 (which includes \$210,000 for the recurring annual subscription cost and \$24,500 one-time installation cost), and subject to final minor edits by the City Attorney.
- 3) Approve Resolution No. 2023-56 establishing ALPR Use Policy and Delegation of Responsibilities to the Assistant Chief of Police / Sheriff's Lieutenant.

BACKGROUND:

For several years, law enforcement agencies across the nation, to include the Riverside County Sheriff's Department and agencies within the County of Riverside, have used Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) technology to aid in criminal investigations and lifesaving emergencies. The ALPR system consists of fixed cameras mounted existing traffic or lighting posts that automatically recognize and photograph passing vehicles, through which license plates are translated into alphanumeric characters. The resulting data is compared to law enforcement databases to identify vehicles reported stolen, wanted connection to a crime, related to abducted or missing children, or are displaying lost or stolen license plates. If the license number is found to be wanted, the system alerts the local law enforcement users so they can investigate further. Prior to any enforcement activity being initiated, deputies are required to verify alerts with dispatch or directly via the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS). The ALPR data is only accessible by law enforcement personnel for official investigative purposes and all access and database inquiries are logged and available for audit.

The Riverside County Sheriff's Department is committed to operating ALPR technology in a measured means that balances personal privacy concerns and public safety. The Department follows strict protocols in the access, storage and use of ALPR data to ensure its integrity and compliance with applicable laws. Data may only be used for official law enforcement purposes, and cannot be shared, transferred, or sold for any other use. Employees are required to attend four hours of training about the system and policy prior to being given access to the system.

The ALPR vendor ("Flock Safety") is required to maintain security procedures and practices, including operational, administrative, technical, and physical safeguards, to protect ALPR information from unauthorized access, destruction, use, modification, or disclosure.

On March 17, 2021, this item was taken to the Building/Code Enforcement/Public Safety Sub-Committee for discussion with the committee approving it to move forward to the City Council for discussion. On May 26, 2021, Staff presented Item 36 to purchase 65 cameras and subscribe to the ALPR software system. City Council directed staff to return item back to the Building/Code Enforcement/Public Safety Sub-Committee to discuss different cost options in regards to the number of cameras to be installed. On May 30, 2023, Building/Code Enforcement/Public Safety Sub-Committee discussed three different cost options to return to the City Council for discussion and approval:

- Option 1: 30 Cameras:
 - $\$90,000 = (30 \text{ cameras} \times \$3,000/\text{unit})$ – Recurring Annual Subscription Cost
 - $\$10,500 = (30 \text{ cameras} \times \$350/\text{unit})$ – One Time Installation Cost
 - **Total: \$100,500**
- Option 2: 50 Cameras:
 - $\$150,000 = (50 \text{ cameras} \times \$3,000/\text{unit})$ – Recurring Annual Subscription Cost
 - $\$17,500 = (50 \text{ cameras} \times \$350/\text{unit})$ – One Time Installation Cost
 - **Total: \$167,500**
- Option 3: 70 Cameras:
 - $\$210,000 = (70 \text{ cameras} \times \$3,000/\text{unit})$ – Recurring Annual Subscription Cost
 - $\$24,500 = (70 \text{ cameras} \times \$350/\text{unit})$ – One Time Installation Cost
 - **Total: \$234,500**

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

Effective policing is dependent on the efficient and continuous sharing and distribution of information to its field staff, which is largely accomplished through fliers and verbal daily briefings. As field staff continue to respond to and investigate new crimes, previously shared information becomes less relevant and difficult to recall, resulting in many unsolved crimes.

ALPR is designed to be a force multiplier for agencies that deploy this technology, allowing an opportunity to keep historical cases relevant without the need of fliers or individual recollection, by independently identifying wanted vehicles and bringing them to the attention of deputies. Law enforcement agencies who have deployed this technology, have benefited from a crime reduction rate of up to 60%.

Information obtained through ALPR technology is not enough evidence for any arrest and is simply another method of obtaining an investigative lead, where one did not exist before – thus, allowing more opportunity to identify suspects in cases such as burglaries, assaults, robberies, shootings, murders, stolen vehicles, hit and run collisions and locating missing juveniles or adults.

Many agencies throughout Riverside County to include cities who contract for law enforcement services with the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, have already approved and deployed this technology within their communities. Law enforcement efforts to solve and combat crime are most successful as regional collaborative efforts. ALPR allows an opportunity to participate and solve crime regionally and locally.

The City of Coachella and other east valley cities have historically seen a disproportioned rate of violent and gang related crime in comparison to other communities. In 2020 alone, the city of Coachella experienced 125 shooting cases where hundreds of fired casings were recovered, and another 191 cases of reported shootings where no casings were found. During the same year, 192 families had their vehicle stolen, some of which were never recovered. ALPR technology has the analytical ability to compare dates and times of events to one another in search of common vehicles at the scene of these crimes, which can translate to an investigative lead towards the apprehension of offenders before they have an opportunity to reoffend.

In effort to balance personal privacy concerns and public safety, ALPR cameras are proposed to be mounted on vertical traffic/light posts outside of residential communities, focused on the rear end of passing vehicles and narrowly focused on the roadway to prevent any inadvertent captures.

If authorized, the City of Coachella will be the customer/subscriber and owner of its data captured. By resolution, training, usage and audit responsibility will be delegated to the Assistant Chief of Police/Sheriff's Lieutenant, with the oversight of the City Manager.

Independent studies conducted by "Flock Safety" have shown that most data collected through ALPR is only accessed or is useful within the first (30) days of capture. As a result, the data retention period allowed by "Flock Safety" is (30) days, after which it is automatically purged.

ALTERNATIVES:

- 1) Approve the procurement of 50 ALPR cameras and authorize the City Manager to execute the attached Government Agency Customer Agreement for the amount of \$167,500 (which includes \$150,000 for the recurring annual subscription cost and \$17,500 one-time installation cost), and subject to final minor edits by the City Attorney
- 2) Approve the procurement of 30 ALPR cameras and authorize the City Manager to execute the attached Government Agency Customer Agreement for the amount of \$100,500 (which includes \$90,000 for the recurring annual subscription cost and \$10,500 one-time installation cost), and subject to final minor edits by the City Attorney.
- 3) Continue the item and provide staff with direction.
- 4) Take no action.

FISCAL IMPACT:

ALPR procured through “Flock Safety” is a subscription-based service with year-to-year contracts and no hardware to maintain. Costs are inclusive of repairs and maintenance as necessary with no additional costs to the city. The purchase of this equipment will require a \$234,500 appropriation from the City’s General Fund:

- \$210,000 = (70 cameras x \$3,000/unit) – Recurring Annual Subscription Cost
- \$24,500 = (70 cameras x \$350/unit) – One Time Installation Cost
 - **Total: \$234,500**

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1) Resolution No. 2023-56 establishing ALPR Use Policy and Delegation of Responsibilities to the Assistant Chief of Police/Sheriff’s Lieutenant.
- 2) Government Agency Customer Agreement
- 3) Addendum – Supplemental Conditions
- 4) Exhibit B – Insurance Requirements
- 5) Flock Safety Subscription Proposal and Order Form
- 6) ALPR Power Point Presentation