CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
CITY OF FAIR OAKS RANCH, TEXAS

AGENDA TOPIC: Flock Safety Automated License Plate Reader

DATE: July 3, 2025

DEPARTMENT: Public Safety

PRESENTED BY: Todd Smith, Chief of Police

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND:

The City of Fair Oaks Ranch is preparing to implement a network of Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) cameras provided by Flock Safety, with the goal of enhancing community safety and supporting law enforcement efforts through improved investigative capabilities. This initiative, approved during the FY 2024–25 budget process, reflects a growing public safety trend across Texas communities and is scheduled to go live in August 2025 following system testing and policy finalization.

ALPR technology allows law enforcement to automatically capture and analyze images of vehicle license plates, along with identifying details such as make, model, and color. When a vehicle captured by the system matches a known record on a designated "hot list"—such as a stolen vehicle, missing person case, or wanted suspect—the system automatically alerts authorized officers. In addition to responding to active alerts, investigators can use the system to search historical data for vehicles involved in criminal investigations.

The Fair Oaks Ranch Police Department (FORPD) has drafted clear policies to ensure ALPR usage is strictly limited to official law enforcement purposes. The cameras will not be used for traffic citations, red-light enforcement, immigration monitoring, or the collection of biometric data. No facial recognition capabilities are enabled, and the cameras cannot detect or identify people. The ALPR data is securely stored for 30 days unless it becomes evidence in a criminal case. All access is logged and subject to audit. Only the department's Lieutenant and Criminal Investigation Sergeant are authorized to conduct searches; patrol officers may only respond to real-time alerts. (**Exhibit A**)

Currently, seven cameras have been installed at major entry and exit points within city limits, with two additional installations pending approval in the TxDOT right-of-way. Locations include intersections such as Fair Oaks Parkway at Leslie Pfeiffer and Dietz Elkhorn at Old Fredericksburg. These locations were selected to maximize coverage of high-traffic corridors and improve response efficiency.

A regional map demonstrates that numerous Texas cities—such as Boerne, San Antonio, Seguin, Round Rock, and Frisco—have already implemented Flock systems. Fair Oaks Ranch joins this growing network with the intention of leveraging shared data capabilities to enhance regional safety. Data sharing with other agencies will be allowed only upon written request and will require approval by authorized FORPD personnel.

The Flock system's utility is exemplified in cases such as locating missing or endangered residents. For example, if a vulnerable resident is reported missing while driving a silver Honda Civic, officers can enter this description into the Flock system. If any camera captures a matching vehicle, the system immediately alerts police with the time and location of the sighting, aiding in a potentially swift and safe resolution.

The Police Department is currently in a testing phase to validate the system's performance and confirm the accuracy of its public-facing transparency portal. Final internal procedures are being refined to ensure full compliance with an adopted policy. Once activated, the system will operate with robust safeguards and oversight, ensuring it serves its intended purpose: to protect the community while respecting individual privacy.

POLICY ANALYSIS/BENEFIT(S) TO CITIZENS:

- Aligns with Strategic Action Plan Pillar 4 Public Health and Safety
- Directly support the City's mission to protect and promote a high quality of life for all residents
- Will provide law enforcement with timely, actionable information, the Flock Safety camera system will enhance community safety, help deter criminal activity, and improve response times

LONGTERM FINANCIAL & BUDGETARY IMPACT:

A total of $34,050 was allocated for the first year of implementation, which includes the purchase and installation of nine Flock Safety cameras. Ongoing annual operating costs are projected at approximately $27,000.