



BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

AB 5718
July 21, 2020
Regular Business

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	AB 5718: Automated License Plate Readers	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Authorize appropriation to purchase and install Automated License Plate Recognition systems for use in Police Department vehicles.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution

DEPARTMENT:	Police
STAFF:	Jeff Magnan, Police Services Commander
COUNCIL LIAISON:	Salim Nice Lisa Anderl
EXHIBITS:	1. MIPD Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR) Study
CITY COUNCIL PRIORITY:	n/a

AMOUNT OF EXPENDITURE	\$ 86,907
AMOUNT BUDGETED	\$ 0
APPROPRIATION REQUIRED	\$ 86,907

SUMMARY

At the City Council Planning Session in January, staff presented the Department work plans for 2020-2021. One of the Police Department work items was to "Prepare a recommendation and cost estimate for an Automatic License Plate Reader (ALPR) program. ALPRs will allow for greatly improved parking enforcement capabilities, as well as enhance our capacity to identify stolen vehicles." This work item was scheduled to be done sometime in the second or third quarter of the year. Given the COVID-19 Pandemic, most work items were put on hold, including the ALPR project.

At the June 2, 2020 City Council meeting, the City Council discussed the ALPR project, and gave staff the following direction: "To ask the City Manager to put this on an agenda bill for future discussion consistent with her priorities for staff." The staff completed the analysis of the ALPR program and prepared cost estimates for procurement of the equipment.

BACKGROUND

Automated license plate recognition (ALPR) camera systems cross check a vehicle license plate against state and federal databases for public safety issues such as stolen vehicles, missing/endangered people, and wanted persons. Officers are alerted when a suspected vehicle is located by the system and are provided an image and location of the suspect vehicle. Officers verify the information identified by the system and take the necessary action to further investigate.

The system also interfaces with the 'Pay by Phone' parking system to allow officers to enforce paid parking in areas designated by the City by using Global Positioning System data and vehicle information provided by the person using the parking application. The data collected by the ALPR system is stored according to Washington State Law Enforcement Records Retention Schedule and Department Policy.

Since the Mercer Island Police Department is cognizant of privacy concerns associated with ALPR systems, staff contacted the American Civil Liberties Union ("ACLU") to request their input on ALPRs. Their primary concerns focused on privacy and data retention. Staff believe most of the ACLU's concerns are addressed in the City's policy, which limits the reasons the system will alert officers and limits the data retention to a maximum of 14 days.

Data that the system collects is stored for a maximum of 14-days, after which it is automatically purged. If the data is associated with a hit, and a police report is taken, the hit record is stored with the case. Retention for hits associated with police cases will follow the State's retention schedule.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

The initial cost for equipping three vehicles with the ALPR system is \$86,907, which includes the hardware, software, installation, and sales tax. This will be funded from the following resources:

1. \$23,336 of federal seizure funds; and
2. \$63,571 from the Equipment & Technology Fund by reallocating funds for technology projects not completed in the 2019-2020 biennium as follows:
 - a. B&O Tax System: \$17,000
 - b. Financial System Upgrade: \$20,000
 - c. Permitting Software Upgrade: \$26,571 (of \$57,000)

The use of federal seizure funds is restricted to spending for criminal justice purposes and cannot be used to supplant existing operating budgets. The purchase of ALPRs is a qualifying expenditure.

The technology projects listed above will not be completed in this biennium due to staffing changes in 2019 and COVID-19 Pandemic in 2020. The suspended projects will be reconsidered during the 2021-2022 budget discussions.

The ongoing fees for the ALPRs are \$7,725 each year for the first 5 years, which includes software maintenance and the parking enforcement toolkit. If approved for purchase in 2020, the fees this year will be covered by one-time savings in the Police Department budget. The fees for the remaining years will be accounted for in future budgets.

RECOMMENDATION

Alternative actions are provided for City Council consideration below.

1. Authorize the appropriation of \$86,907 from the federal seizure funds and the Equipment & Technology Fund to purchase and install three ALPR systems in the Police Department vehicles.
2. Defer the decision on the purchase of the ALPR system to the 2021-2022 budget discussions, scheduled to begin Fall 2020.
3. Take no further action.