

From: [Kat Snyder](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Cc: [Human Relations Commission](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Automated License Plate Readers study session
Date: Sunday, October 23, 2022 10:35:30 PM

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Dear City Council,

As the police report mentioned, there are some privacy and surveillance concerns around Automated License Plate Readers (ALPRs). I want to bring up one particular point of concern - for us to truly be a Sanctuary City for immigrant communities, we need to shield everyone from ICE surveillance. Vigilant Solutions, for example, is a third party ALPR vendor who sells their data to ICE. In 2020, a large coalition of immigrant activists and privacy advocates lobbied for and passed an ordinance in many cities around the Bay Area - including San Jose - to be sure that their city would not contract with any third party contractors that contract with ICE - Vigilant Solutions in particular. I would like to know how our police department would be sure that the third party vendor they chose would not sell their data to ICE.

The report also states that the fixed ALPR locations will be "strategic." There is well-documented disproportionate surveillance of BIPOC communities, immigrant communities, and low-income communities by police departments across this country - often while describing the surveilled areas as "high crime areas." This report declares that crime statistics will be one factor in choosing fixed ALPR locations. What will PAPD do to make sure the strategic choice of where to place ALPRs in Palo Alto will not result in disproportionate surveillance of the above groups?

I saw that the Police Department was hoping to discuss privacy issues with the ACLU but had trouble getting through. Another great group, specifically around privacy, is the Electronic Frontier Foundation, if you can get them. Alternatively, a large number of the aforementioned immigrant advocacy groups who got their cities to stop contracting with Vigilant Solutions could also provide you useful insights on this topic. Secure Justice, which was instrumental in writing the language used in the Sanctuary City Contracting Ordinance, took a brief look at the October 24th study session item and mentioned that the max 30-day-retention policy was very good and can mitigate some of the harm of ALPR. I hope to chat more with them soon to get a fuller sense of what harms may still need to be mitigated.

My last question is, will this really be "cost effective" as the report states it will be? I would love to see some empirical data behind the report's claim that ALPRs deter crime. George Mason University's Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy found, in a 2010 set of studies, that "the use of LPR in autotheft hotspots does not appear to result in a reduction of crime generally, or autotheft specifically." I'm not aware of empirical research demonstrating positive crime deterrence effects of ALPRs and, before spending city money on it, it would be good to see the data.

Take care,
~Kat Snyder

References:

2010 Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy report on LPRs - https://cebcp.org/wp-content/evidence-based-policing/LPR_FINAL.pdf

From: [Carl Van Wey](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Cc: carl.vanwey@gmail.com; carl.vanwey@comcast.net
Subject: license plate readers
Date: Thursday, October 20, 2022 1:15:31 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from carl.vanwey@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Council,

I cast my vote as strongly in favor of license plate readers throughout the city, as it is a proven method of deterring crime and solving cases.

Carl Van Wey
1425 University ave.