



Legislation Text

File #: 18-0126, **Version:** 1

TO:

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

THROUGH:

Bruce Moe, City Manager

FROM:

Derrick Abell, Chief of Police

SUBJECT:

Update on the Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) Program (Police Chief Abell).

RECEIVE REPORT

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council receive this report.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

There is no fiscal implication associated with the recommended action.

BACKGROUND:

The presence of community cameras and license plate readers in public areas has been a growing trend in the United States. License plate reader (LPR) technology has proven to be an efficient way for law enforcement to generate investigative leads and locate suspects, helping to preserve and enhance safety in the community.

Fixed LPRs scan the license plates of passing vehicles; the plate information is then automatically checked against a database for existing unresolved violations, wants/warrants, etc. Dispatch then receives an immediate alert of any reported stolen vehicle passing through, as well as vehicles listed as "wanted" in connection with crimes, missing persons, arrest warrants associated with a vehicle, and stolen license plates. Manhattan Beach detectives also have access to the database of license plates to assist them in criminal investigations.

At the November 3, 2015, City Council meeting, staff was directed to report back to City Council regarding the feasibility of installing cameras and license plate readers at critical points of ingress and egress to the City. Staff returned to City Council on April 5, 2016, with a report on the feasibility of the project, as well as the proposed locations for the license plate readers. City Council subsequently approved the concept and a budget was appropriated for Fiscal Year 2016/2017. At the February 21, 2017, City Council meeting, a contract for purchase, installation, and software was awarded to Vigilant Solutions. Vigilant Solutions also offers powerful software analytics to expedite investigative searches.

Other Los Angeles area agencies utilizing Vigilant Solutions include California Highway Patrol, Los

Angeles Sheriff's Department, Long Beach Police, Port of Long Beach, Torrance, Hawthorne, Rancho Palos Verdes, Rolling Hills Estates, Rolling Hills, Palos Verdes Estates, Downey, Burbank, West Covina, Glendora, Bell, Whittier, South Gate, Bell Gardens, Azusa, Monrovia, Montebello, Chino, La Verne, Claremont and Beverly Hills.

DISCUSSION:

The Police Department worked closely with the Traffic Engineer to determine the intersections that carried the highest volume of cars at points of ingress and egress, with each intersection averaging 15,000 cars daily. There were 7 intersections initially identified. Two of the seven intersections were along the Sepulveda corridor (at Rosecrans and at Artesia), and fall under the jurisdiction of California Department of Transportation (Cal Trans). Unfortunately, Cal Trans denied Manhattan Beach's permit applications to install cameras on their infrastructure.

The Police Department moved forward with installation of cameras at the other 5 locations (Artesia/Aviation, Manhattan Beach Blvd./Aviation, Marine/Aviation, Rosecrans/Aviation, and 45th/Highland). Four of the five intersections have multiple directions being monitored (i.e. traffic east and west bound).

The installation was completed in August 2017.

In the first six months, the system has proved to be a positive addition to the Manhattan Beach Police Department's investigative tool box, including solving or providing important leads on over 30 investigations. Additionally, fifteen stolen vehicles were recovered, a missing person was found, and 20 felony arrests were made (including a suspected burglary crew, a package thief, and numerous suspected identity thieves). Many of the vehicles located had evidence of fraud (stolen mail, credit cards, etc.) or illegal narcotics; one car had an embosser used to manufacture fraudulent credit cards; one had numerous burglary tools; and two had loaded handguns.

Pursuant to the City's contract with Vigilant Solutions, the manufacturer of the ALPR system, Vigilant may not share any of the data generated by Manhattan Beach without the City's permission. By policy, the City will not share the data except under very limited circumstances, and only when such sharing directly benefits the City, such as in a criminal investigation (e.g., if a robbery is committed in another jurisdiction and the suspect travels through Manhattan Beach, the City may share ALPR information with that other jurisdiction).

The Police Department will continue to adhere to all federal, state, and local laws pertaining to the project. License plate data is stored for one year and then is automatically deleted. LPR data will be stored longer if it pertains to a specific criminal investigation. Manhattan Beach police officers are only authorized to conduct license plate searches for legitimate criminal investigative purposes.

PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST:

Prior to entering in a contract to install the license plate readers, information about the license plate reader project, as well as opportunities to learn more about the project and comment on the project, were publicized via Nixle, Facebook, and press release. A community meeting was conducted on August 31, 2016, to share information and answer questions about the project; over 50 residents

attended.

An Open City Hall topic was also created in August 2016. The topic received 86 responses, which is equivalent to approximately 4.3 hours of public comment. Of the total respondents, 77% were in favor of installing cameras and LPRs, 17% were opposed, and 6% were neutral. Of the 86 respondents, 80 were Manhattan Beach residents; 83% of resident respondents were in favor of installing cameras and LPRs. Opponents noted concerns about privacy and accountability.

LEGAL REVIEW:

The City Attorney has reviewed this report and determined that no additional legal review is necessary.