



Department Source: Police

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: September 16, 2024

Re: Contract with Flock Group, Inc for the purchase of Flock Safety camera systems for Columbia Police Department and Columbia Parks and Recreation Department

Executive Summary

Staff has prepared for Council consideration an ordinance authorizing the appropriation of \$539,400 from General Fund Reserves to the Police Budget and authorizing the City Manager to sign a contract with Flock Group, Inc for the purchase of the Flock Safety camera systems for both Police and Parks & Recreation.

Discussion

The Flock Safety camera system consists of license plate recognition (LPR) cameras and live-view intersection cameras that can be strategically placed to capture detailed data about license plates and vehicles used to commit crimes, enabling quick and efficient action. In many cases, a license plate number is a crucial piece of evidence police can use to pursue a criminal investigation. A license plate is objective, actionable, and discrete. Unlike reactive security systems, license plate recognition (LPR) systems provide proactive, data-driven, evidence. By alerting police when a stolen or known suspect vehicle enters a community they can help to prevent further crime before it happens and assist in the quicker apprehension of an offender. A license plate gives officers and detectives a clear direction in their investigations. Unlike historically-biased eyewitness testimony, a license plate number greatly reduces the potential for bias or false identifications.

Flock technology uses machine learning to search vehicles based on unique vehicle criteria, time, and location. It does not detect people and does not utilize facial recognition or other biometric technology. It is not used for the enforcement of traffic laws (such as speeding) or to enforce parking violations. The data captured in the system is stored and secured with end-to-end encryption and is owned by the Columbia Police Department. All data is automatically deleted from the system after 30 days if it is not entered into evidence in connection with a criminal offense. Flock does not sell data to 3rd parties.

Flock offers an optional transparency portal at no cost to agencies that use their system. This portal gives citizens easy access to things like applicable policies, procedures, ordinances, usage metrics, and auditing. CPD would utilize this portal as part of the purchase to provide increased transparency and accountability to the community.

CPD and Flock representatives held a series of public engagement meetings on August 14th and 15th, 2024. Four meetings were held each day as follows:



City of Columbia

701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201

August 14th: 9:00am Lange Middle School

12:00pm City Hall Council Chambers

3:00 pm Daniel Boone Regional Library Friends Room

7:00pm Molly Thomas-Bowden Neighborhood Policing Center Community Room

August 15th: 9:00am The Crossing Church Student Center

12:00pm City Hall Council Chambers

3:00pm Gentry Middle School

7:00pm Boone Electric Community Room

At each meeting CPD staff provided attendees with a draft policy and procedure, draft ordinance, placement maps (by CPD Beat and Ward), and an informational packet from Flock Safety (all of these items can be found on the City's BeHeardCoMo site). Flock Safety representatives went through an informational slideshow and Chief Schlude spoke about how CPD would implement and use the technology, if approved. Attendees asked questions and had the opportunity to leave comments on provided cards. In addition to the in-person meetings a project was posted on the BeHeardCoMo website on August 14, 2024 and closed on September 10, 2024. All comments and questions received via BeHeard, as well as any comment cards or other correspondence received by staff will be provided to the City Council prior to the October 7, 2024 City Council Meeting.

The Police Department's portion of the contract is \$539,400 for the first year (includes installation cost) then \$476,000 annually thereafter. The Parks and Recreation Department's portion of the contract is \$45,450 for the first year (includes installation cost) then \$39,000 annually thereafter.

The term of the contract is 12 months from date of signing, with automatic renewals of 1 year unless either party gives notice of non-renewal at least thirty (30) days prior to the end of the then-current term.

Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: \$539,400 increase to Police Operating Budget, \$539,400 decrease to General Fund Reserves. No impact for Parks & Recreation, as the \$45,450 is available in the FY25 Operating budget.

Long-Term Impact: Annual cost of \$476,000 per year for Police and \$39,000 per year for Parks and Recreation, if renewed

Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

[Strategic Plan Impacts:](#)

Primary Impact: Safe Neighborhoods, Secondary Impact: Not Applicable, Tertiary Impact: Tertiary



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Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Inter-Governmental Cooperation, Secondary Impact: Not applicable,
Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

Legislative History

Date	Action
N/A	N/A

Suggested Council Action

Should Council agree, staff recommends passage of the ordinance authorizing the appropriation of \$539,400 from General Fund Reserves to the Police Budget and authorizing the City Manager to sign a contract with Flock Group, Inc for the purchase of the Flock Safety camera systems for both Police and Parks & Recreation.