

FUSUS Real Time Crime Center Questions

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Technology

What is FUSUS?

FUSUS is a camera integration platform that allows someone to view video feeds from different public and private sources, in one place, all in real time. It can integrate license plate readers on the same platform, allowing officers to access all information from the same screen in their patrol cars. It can be used to send alerts and transmit locations.

- What does “FUSUS” mean?

According to the company, it comes from the ancient Greek word for “spindle,” used in weaving. FUSUS weaves together multiple public and private video and data sources into a single feed.

- Is FUSUS a fusion center?

No. A fusion center combines the resources of public and private sector entities, including the federal government, to monitor threats to national security.

- Who is the vendor?

FUSUS is a public safety technology company based in Peachtree Corners, GA (part of the metro Atlanta area) at 5550 Triangle Parkway. It was founded in 2019 by CEO Chris Lindenau.

Video

How would you get the video?

Registration: A business could register with CPD by providing a name, contact information and the number of cameras at its location. This would allow an officer or detective to contact the business when there is an incident at or near the location. The business could decide if it wanted to share access to its video, or not.

Integration: A business can decide to share its live video stream directly with CPD, either continuously or for individual incidents. The business would need to plug a CORE device, sold by FUSUS, into its camera system. Pricing starts at around \$200, depending on the number of cameras and the CORE unit’s storage capacity.

Don’t residents and businesses already share video?

Individuals and businesses already share video with Columbia Police, upon request, but FUSUS would greatly streamline this process. Currently officers either visit a residence or a business to request footage or otherwise reach out to individuals who could potentially have footage. With FUSUS, officers could immediately access video from businesses that have already agreed to share their cameras with the Department.

How long is it saved?

Any footage CPD saves will be treated the same as it is now. This platform allows us to obtain the footage faster. Our current practice is to request footage from a person or business. We sometimes retrieve it in person whenever someone authorized to release it, such as a store manager, is available. This might be days or weeks later. Footage is sometimes put on a thumb drive or may occasionally be sent to the Department electronically. The footage is maintained as evidence in the case for as long as may be needed.

Who owns the video?

Whoever owns the camera owns the video. If CPD requests a video for evidence, it enters the Department's possession. This is the Department's current practice.

Would City-owned cameras be integrated?

It would make sense, because incidents also can occur at our buildings, facilities, critical infrastructure and in The District.

Funding

How much will this cost the City?

As stated in our July 18, 2022 Council memo, the cost would be \$315,000 for a three-year contract. If the contract is renewed in year four, it would cost around \$125,000 per year.

How will it be funded?

The system would be paid for by appropriating \$315,000 from CPD's Asset Forfeiture Fund to its Patrol Operating Fund. This resource is already on hand and merely requires a budget amendment to authorize a fund transfer.

- What is "asset forfeiture"?
CPD frequently partners with federal agencies that investigate criminals who prey on vulnerable persons for financial gain. When a federal agency seizes money and property used in the commission of crimes, it is authorized to share the assets with cooperating law enforcement agencies. (See CPD's website for more information on the Federal Asset Forfeiture program)
- How have these assets been used?
Since 2010, CPD has used these assets to fund technology, equipment, consultant services and K9s. (A full listing of revenues and expenses since 2010 can be found on CPD's website)

Implementation

What is the plan for implementation?

Once Council approves the proposed fund transfer and a contract is executed, CPD will start planning internal operations, community education and outreach to businesses that own security cameras.

Community

How do you maintain residents' privacy?

Any camera access will be provided on a voluntary basis. If cameras are registered, CPD must seek the owner's permission to view footage for a specific incident. If cameras are integrated, the owner can permit access continuously or for specific incidents, based on the owner's privacy settings. The Department will develop policies addressing privacy and other implementation issues. Policies in effect at other FUSUS client agencies will be helpful resources.

How can we trust that the Department won't use FUSUS to racially profile residents?

The FUSUS platform does not monitor race or facial recognition. It looks at objects such as cars, bicycles, backpacks and other items that could be involved in a crime.

How will you assure officers won't use it inappropriately?

The Department will put in place policies and procedures regarding the use of FUSUS prior to implementation. The platform itself has features that allow use of the software to be reviewed. FUSUS has an audit function that allows use of the platform to be tracked.

Rapid access to video footage is likely to reduce investigative contacts based on description alone. This system allows officers, in many cases, to rely on a video instead of someone's perception or recollection of events and descriptions.

Alerts/Notifications

Text alerts can be sent directly out via the FUSUS platform to the community, keeping them notified of important events/incidents.

Tips can be sent directly to the Columbia Police Department through a text application designated for the City of Columbia.

FUSUS Emergency Alert System can be provided to the staff at the schools and is compatible with Android and IOS devices. Emergency alerts will be sent to the Police Department and all officers in the field. When alerts are sent, cameras can be immediately activated in the vicinity of the alert.

Are you focusing on any places in particular?

Addressing violence in The District was the catalyst for considering FUSUS. The Department anticipates this being used city-wide, depending on who has granted permission to view security camera video.

When and how will you educate the community?

CPD has held several demonstrations for stakeholders and potential participants. Once the fund transfer is approved, a more extensive community outreach program will take place. FUSUS helps its client agencies with this activity.

Who has seen the demonstration?

Downtown Leadership Council; The District Board of Directors; Columbia Public Schools; Boone County Sheriff's Department; MUPD; Office of Emergency Management; Columbia Housing Authority; Columbia Mall; Columbia Police Foundation; banking representatives; local business owners; City staff members; and others. Several City staff members and The District's Executive Director visited FUSUS headquarters and the Atlanta and Cobb County police departments for a detailed demonstration and briefing.

Strategic Priority: Safe Neighborhoods

How will FUSUS help address community violence?

FUSUS provides the potential for police and other community members to jointly reduce and prevent crime using real time information. The ability to solve crimes improves as more video is shared. Police will be able to access cameras in real time when responding to calls, and this will also allow officers to capture accurate suspect information (cars and other objects) in real time. Using accurate information to make an arrest more quickly can prevent the occurrence of future crimes.

Client Experience

Has there been a reduction in crime?

The company website and a brief review of news media has shown reports that FUSUS has made a positive impact on crime reduction in cities across the nation (including Atlanta and Cobb County, GA, Jackson and Starkville, MS; Rocky Mount, NC and others).