COUNCIL MEETING
4/3/2023
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CITY OF PALO ALTO

Use of Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR) Technology

Report # 2301-0741

April 3, 2023

ALPR – Agenda Action Items

Staff is recommending that the Council:

- Approve a 3-year contract with Flock Safety to implement fixed ALPR technology, in an amount not to exceed $174,400;
- Approve the use of fixed ALPR technology to deter and investigate criminal activity
- Approve the fixed ALPR surveillance use policy

ALPR – What is it?

- **Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR)** technology uses a combination of cameras and computer software to scan the license plates of passing vehicles.

- These computer-readable images allow law enforcement to compare plate numbers against plates of wanted vehicles and vehicles associated with wanted persons, missing persons, etc.

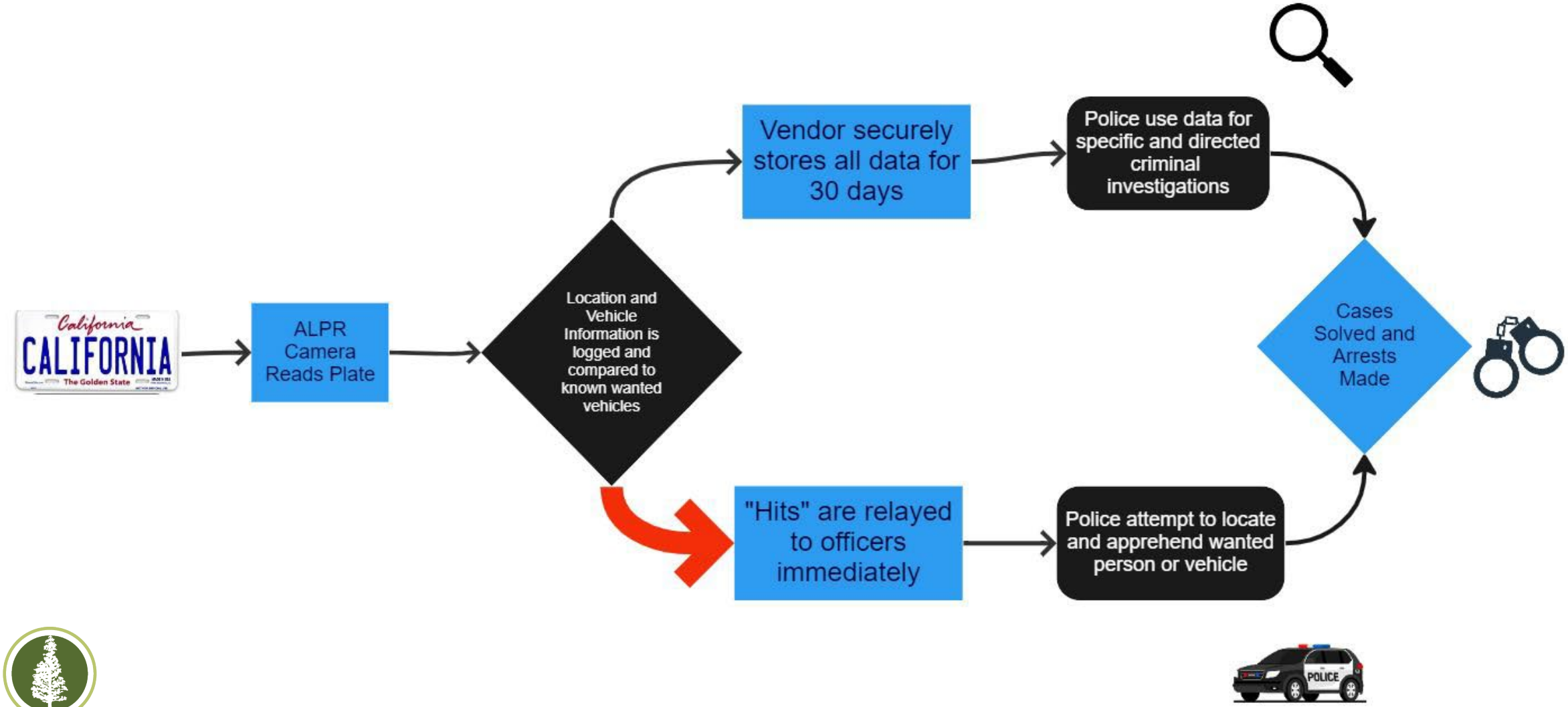
ALPR – Types

Two types of ALPR:

MOBILE
(mounted on a police vehicle)

FIXED
(mounted on pole or other piece of infrastructure)

ALPR – How It Works



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ALPR – What Problems Does it Address?

- Regional increases in property crimes, including catalytic converter thefts, auto burglaries, vehicle thefts and organized retail thefts
- Recent, albeit rare, brazen robberies and assaults
- Offender behavior:
  - use of vehicles;
  - use of stolen vehicles or vehicles with a stolen plate;
  - engage in crimes in multiple jurisdictions;
- Cost-effective force multiplier

ALPR – What Information is Captured?

- A fixed ALPR system is designed to capture:
  - the date, time, and location;
  - license plate (state, partial, paper, and no plate);
  - vehicle characteristics (make, model, type, and color)

ALPR – What Information Is *Not* Captured?

- A fixed ALPR system *is not* intended to capture images of vehicle occupants
- A fixed ALPR system *does not* use facial recognition

ALPR – Fixed ALPR vs. Red Light Cameras

- A red light camera is designed to capture driver images for driver identification
- A fixed ALPR system is designed to capture rear license plate images for vehicle identification

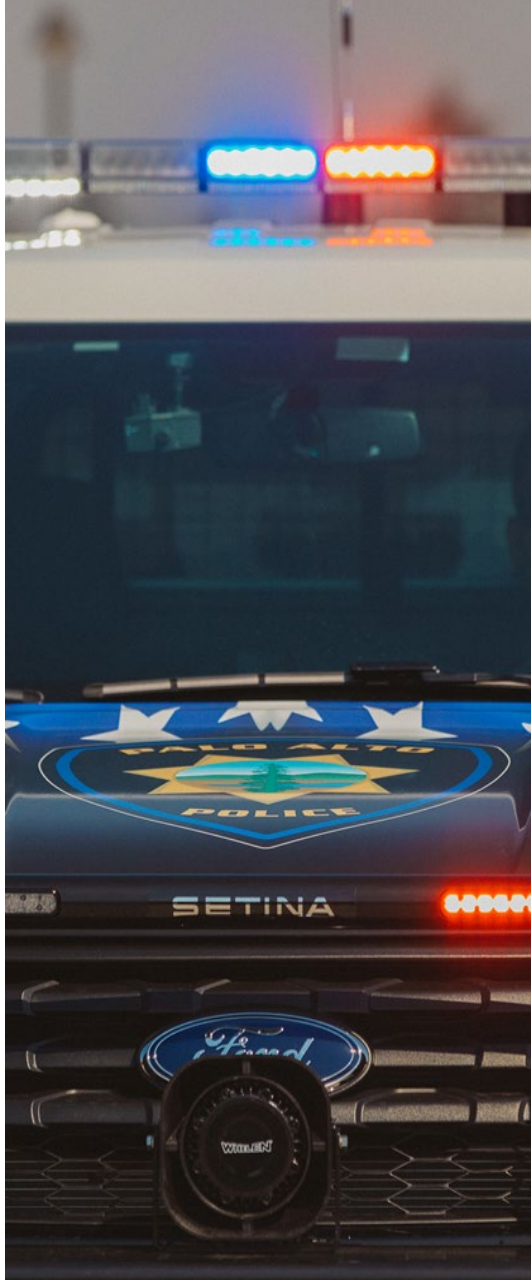
ALPR – Uses & Benefits

USES

- Proactive
  Real-time alerts
- Reactive (Investigative)
  Searchable database

BENEFITS

- ✓ Real-time Alerts
- ✓ Deterrence
- ✓ Solve Crimes Already Committed
- ✓ Regional Coordination
- ✓ Expanded Searchable Data Set



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ALPR – Local Implementation & Collaboration

- ALPR technology is an existing tool for local law enforcement including many neighboring communities – a growing number of Bay Area agencies already use Flock Safety or are pursuing it
- Numerous success stories and examples of where it *could* have been used in Palo Alto
- Private businesses, HOAs, and individuals have ALPR and may elect to share that data with law enforcement

ALPR – Local Implementation & Collaboration (cont.)

- Implementation plan calls for 20 total cameras to be installed at strategically-selected locations based on several factors: crime statistics, common vehicular ingress and egress points, and traffic volume
- No ALPR cameras permanently installed in residential neighborhoods. Could *temporarily* relocate an ALPR camera into a neighborhood long enough to address a specific crime trend in that area

ALPR – Legal Considerations

Palo Alto

Surveillance Technology Ordinance

- Council approval required
- Weigh benefits versus costs and concerns
- Surveillance use policy

State Law

- Requires training
- Requires limitations/controls on access
- Requires limitations on sharing
- Criminal penalties for unauthorized access

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ALPR – Surveillance Use Policy Components

Training and Access

- Need to know and right to know only;
- Training provided to employees;
- Individual log-in and purpose required;
- Agency controls with whom data is shared;
  - Local law enforcement only (no fusion centers)
  - Via MOU or individual query only
  - No bulk data transfers
  - No outside sharing by vendor

Data Security

- CJIS-compliant transmission and storage by vendor

Data Retention

- Automatically purged after 30 days*

Auditing

- Queries logged and auditable
- Compliance officer

ALPR – Why Flock Safety?

- Technology
  - Confidence in durability and reliability of hardware and support
  - Improved ability to collaborate with others
  - Technology captures other vehicle information (e.g., make, model, color)
  - Agency ownership and customizable control over its own data
  - Robust auditing capabilities of all queries
  - Transparency Portal
- Implementation
  - Expertise with installation on state highways and county roadways (i.e., SR-82, Oregon Expressway)
  - Locating cameras to maximize efficiency

ALPR – Resource Impact

- 3-year contract with Flock Safety
- City does not install, own, or maintain cameras
- Total estimated costs of deployment:
  - $61,900 (balance of FY23, plus FY24)
    - Installation
    - Subscription (data storage and access)
  - $52,000 per subsequent year (FY25 and FY26)
  - Funding for years 1-2 to come from SLES fund balance
  - Option to renew for 2 additional years

ALPR –Community Outreach and Input

• Council Study Session	October 2022
• ACLU meeting	November 2022
• Chamber & neighborhood meetings	December 2022
• Launch of ALPR info webpage	February 2023
• Community virtual info session	March 2023
• Draft surveillance policy published	March 2023

ALPR – Next Steps

- ✓ Council's feedback and discussion on potential implementation of ALPR technology
- ✓ Gather community feedback
- ✓ Complete a procurement process
- Council approval of agreement, deployment plan, and associated surveillance use policy
- Implementation (projected to occur within 8 weeks of approval)

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