

# City of Alameda



## Interdepartmental Memorandum

Date: December 6, 2023

To: Nishant Joshi  
Chief of Police

From: Matthew McMullen *Matt McMullen*  
Captain, Bureau of Support Services

RE: **Automated License Plate Reader Annual Audit**

I was the automated license plate reader administrator from its inception until December 3, 2023. As the system administrator, I was required to ensure that an annual audit of the detection and browsing inquiries was conducted. Per policy, the audit must include a sampling from the last calendar year with no less than ten detection browsing inquiries to be randomly selected. Since the Flock system and automated license plate reader camera technology were new to the Alameda Police Department, I requested monthly audits of all browsing inquiries to ensure compliance until personnel became more familiar with this technology. The Technical Support Services Sergeant Ortega conducted these audits under the leadership and management of Lieutenant DeRespini and Lieutenant Foster.

In April 2023, 25 of the 35 fixed license plate reader cameras were installed and operational. That number has since grown to 33 cameras. The significant delay in the installation was attributed to the permitting process. As of December 3, 2023, the last two cameras to be installed are working through the Caltrans permit approval process. In addition to the fixed system, 21 mobile automated license plate readers were installed in our marked patrol fleet on September 13 and 14, 2023. As of December 3, 2023, the Alameda Police Department has 54 automated license plate readers operational on fixed and mobile platforms.

Since their installation, the fixed automated license plate readers have scanned 37,790,692 license plates. The mobile automated license plate readers scanned 893,604 during their first 30 days of use. The total number of reads from fixed and mobile devices is 38,684,296. The fixed automated license plate readers recorded 25,666 hotlist alerts since they were installed, while the mobile devices recorded 433 in their first month of use. The fixed and mobile automated systems have alerted our personnel of 26,099 vehicles of interest.

The fixed and mobile systems allow search queries to be conducted through a single point query; therefore, that number is not bifurcated or distinguishable by the two systems. The total number of inquiries through October of 2023 was 763. Of those, 11 inquiries were missing either a report number or crime code, but never both. During further inspection, those searches did not violate the policy's provisions but rather only the requirement to have the report number and crime code listed in the search field justification. All inquiries without the complete proper documentation were corrected with additional training, corrective action, and documented with personnel action slips.

The systems have produced 188 investigative leads for criminal cases, resulting in 36 apprehended suspects. Automated license plate reader technology has been directly attributed to the recovery of 47 stolen vehicles. However, the technology has helped gather digital evidence in 482 separate stolen vehicle cases. Neither fixed nor mobile automated license plate systems have been used to help identify witnesses.

We received no formal requests from local agencies for individualized cases that have been denied. Still, we have denied many requests to share our automated license plate data in part or its entirety with numerous police agencies across the nation. We received nine formal requests for automated license plate reader data from five local law enforcement agencies. In each instance, the information requested met our department policy standard. To safeguard our automated license plate reader data, we transferred the images from our automated license plate reader system into our digital evidence repository before sharing them. This allowed us to share the data without granting access to our automated license plate reader system. We have shared with the following agencies: the San Pablo Police Department, the Emeryville Police Department, the East Bay Regional Parks Police, the Alameda County Sheriff's Office, and the San Leandro Police Department.

We have paid Flock \$79,075.00 for fixed automated license plate readers and Axon \$66,236.69 for vehicle cameras. From patrol alerts to investigative insights, I assess the cost of the system to the benefits derived as valuable. In this assessment, I weighed the investigative leads in two murder cases as invaluable. The monetary evaluation of bringing justice to the families who lost loved ones to violence is inappropriate and simultaneously infinite. However, when our employees use this technology within policy, it has proved wholly beneficial in the first months of use.