City of Mountain View

COUNCIL REPORT

DATE: February 24, 2026

CATEGORY: New Business

DEPT.: Police Department

TITLE: **Automated License Plate Reader Contract**

RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the City Manager or designee to terminate the existing automated license plate reader contract with Flock Safety.

BACKGROUND

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Council authorization for the City to terminate its contract with Flock Safety as the vendor for the City's automated license plate reader (ALPR) pilot program. The report provides the following information:

- The City's reasons and process for exploring the use of ALPR technology;
- The review and approval process for conducting an ALPR pilot and entering into a contract with Flock, including Council direction for reporting on and reauthorizing the pilot;
- The process for ALPR system and procedure development and camera installation;
- The benefits of license plate reader technology in assisting the Mountain View Police Department (MVPD) in investigating, solving, and deterring crime;
- The discovery by the MVPD that settings had been enabled by Flock Safety in the system configuration and onboarding process that allowed agencies to search Mountain View's ALPR data without going through the established, required procedure of agreeing to the City's ALPR policy and receiving access approval from the Police Chief or designee. These settings include a "National Lookup" function, which gave access to agencies outside of California on one camera from August to November 2024, which is expressly prohibited by Mountain View policy and California state law, and a "Statewide Lookup" function,

which gave access to agencies within California on all cameras from August 2024 to January 2026;

- Public Records Act requests and concerns expressed by community members about the potential that Mountain View's ALPR data might be accessed and used by statewide or out-of-state agencies in ways that could jeopardize the privacy, rights, security, and safety of people who live, work in, or visit Mountain View;

- What the MVPD has done to understand and address the unauthorized access to Mountain View's ALPR data, including initiating an audit, providing information to the community and the media, and turning off all ALPR cameras in Mountain View;

- Lessons learned from the experience of setting up, implementing, using, and auditing an ALPR system; and

- Next steps in continuing engagement with the community about individual privacy and public safety concerns and exploration of appropriate strategies and tools to address these concerns, including coordination with neighboring jurisdictions.

Initial Exploration of ALPR Technology as a Public Safety Tool

As a matter of regular practice, the MVPD tracks crime data and public safety concerns in Mountain View and explores evolving practices and tools to help prevent and solve crime, keep the community safe, provide exceptional customer service, and operate with the highest level of transparency and accountability. Toward these ends, the Department identified ALPR technology as a valuable resource to support police investigations to solve and deter crime, locate missing persons, and receive real-time alerts about stolen and wanted vehicles.

ALPR systems use high-speed cameras, often mounted on poles in strategic locations, to capture images of license plates and other vehicle information (such as make, model, color), and compare them to "hot lists" of vehicles of interest. ALPR systems provide real-time alerts to participating law enforcement agencies about the time and location at which a vehicle of interest is captured by a camera.

Such systems allow investigators to turn incomplete descriptions of vehicles of interest, such as partial plates, vehicle color, or vehicle type, into actionable investigative leads, which is not possible through existing Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) or traditional law enforcement databases. The technology can also support regional coordination, allowing local agencies to collaboratively investigate crimes that cross jurisdictional boundaries, including those involving organized regional crime rings and repeat offenders. ALPR systems provide a cost-effective policing "multiplier" that improves officer response, strengthens regional partnerships, and increases the Department's ability to prevent and solve crimes. **These enhanced capabilities**

have become of greater interest as organized crime rings committing vehicle burglary and thefts, retail smash and grab robberies, and home break-ins have become increasingly concerning for Mountain View and the region.

Vetting of Flock Safety as an ALPR Provider

The MVPD has been aware of Flock Safety as a vendor of ALPR systems, as Flock Safety has been in use by several nearby law enforcement agencies for some time. MVPD sought feedback from some agencies that reported strong, consistent investigative benefits from using Flock Safety ALPR technology. Benefits included recovery of stolen vehicles, timely arrests in serious incidents, and strengthened regional collaboration.

In 2022, the MVPD entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Flock Safety to establish a "view only" account to allow Mountain View investigators to search ALPR data, even though the City did not have any Flock Safety cameras and was not capturing vehicle images in Mountain View. MVPD staff found that having the ability to search for vehicles of interest generated leads that would not have otherwise been available and that these leads helped investigate and solve crimes.

As part of its consideration to recommend implementation of a Flock Safety ALPR system in Mountain View, the MVPD conducted a review of the Flock Safety ALPR platform from an operational, technical, administrative, and policy perspective. MVPD's policy priority was that any selected system would include effective data-protection safeguards, ensuring that information would be collected, shared, and used only for narrowly defined and approved purposes. The Flock Safety system was assessed to address this priority by limiting unnecessary data collection through features such as short data retention periods, camera focus on vehicle rear ends rather than occupants, and the absence of facial recognition capabilities. The Flock Safety system also controls access to collected data through encrypted data handling, multi-factor authentication, configurable access controls, and use of Amazon Web Services for data security.

Command staff, supervisors, and detectives reviewed system capabilities, user controls, dashboard functions, audit features, and configuration settings through vendor demonstrations and direct platform use and walkthroughs. Staff held working sessions with vendor representatives on multiple occasions to further review system architecture, access controls, data retention settings, search functionality, and audit log capabilities. These sessions included examination of administrative dashboards, permission structures, alert functions, and data-sharing controls to assess alignment with Department policy requirements and operational needs.

MVPD personnel also evaluated how the Flock Safety ALPR system would integrate with existing investigative workflows, records practices, and supervisory oversight. This included

consideration of who would be authorized to use the system, query logging, user accountability, internal audit processes, and configuration options intended to ensure policy compliance.

Selection of Flock Safety as a Sole-Source Provider

Flock Safety was selected as a sole-source provider based on its overall alignment with MVPD's public safety objectives and privacy and data-protection priorities. Additional strengths of the Flock Safety ALPR system included its integrated hardware and software platform, vehicle identification capabilities, and a flexible, wireless, and solar-powered deployment model that enabled efficient installation without major infrastructure changes. The vendor's leasing structure also allowed the City to avoid long-term equipment ownership and supported pilot-based evaluation.

Finally, due to its use across Santa Clara County and the Bay Area, Flock Safety provided a shared ALPR network that would enable MVPD to distribute hotlist alerts, such as stolen vehicles, AMBER alerts, and felony suspect vehicles, and receive real-time notifications across jurisdictions, supporting coordinated investigative responses. **At the time of the staff recommendation to set up an ALPR pilot using Flock Safety, 13 of 15 cities in Santa Clara County were using Flock Safety. (The remaining two cities have since implemented Flock.)** With such widespread use of ALPR technology, not being part of a system could put Mountain View at a comparative disadvantage as a crime target, while also making it less able to coordinate with other cities to investigate and solve crimes.

Public Safety Advisory Board Review and Community Engagement

MVPD Staff presented its analysis about ALPR and Flock Safety to the Public Safety Advisory Board (PSAB) on April 25, 2024. Staff provided an overview of the Flock ALPR system and the proposed deployment of 24 cameras, presented a draft ALPR use policy (Policy 460), received public comment from two community members, and answered PSAB members' questions.

In general, the PSAB members spoke positively about the technology, recognizing its potential benefits for community safety, provided safeguards are in place against misuse. One Board member expressed significant privacy concerns, particularly about the creation of a comprehensive database of residents' movements and the potential for other law enforcement agencies to access Mountain View data. The Board member stressed the need for transparent, strictly regulated data use and safeguards for sharing information with other agencies. Public comments at the meeting raised concerns about potential misuse and the need for effective safeguards. MVPD staff responded to questions and concerns and communicated the Department's commitment to comply with City policy and State law prohibiting sharing information with agencies outside California and its understanding of the Flock Safety features that would prevent this and other misuse of Mountain View data.

Safety and transparency measures discussed included:

- Positioning cameras to capture rear vehicle images only, not vehicle occupants
- Capturing still images only, not video or audio clips
- Not including facial recognition capabilities
- Establishing a limited (30-day) retention period for non-inquiry ALPR data
- Establishing an MVPD ALPR use policy
- Requiring training for all MVPD staff before granting access to ALPR data and limiting access to a legitimate law enforcement need
- Requiring MVPD staff to utilize multi-factor authentication during login
- Requiring all MVPD queries to be logged and subject to audit
- Prohibiting sharing of Mountain View data with agencies outside California or use of Mountain View data for the purpose of federal immigration enforcement, consistent with State law
- Requiring any California agency requesting access to review and agree to comply with the City's policy and receive approval by the Police Chief or designee in order to receive access
- Prohibiting Mountain View data from being sold, accessed, or used for any purpose other than legitimate law enforcement or public safety purposes
- Creation of a Mountain View Flock Transparency page describing guiding policies and system usage, including a listing of agencies granted access and the number of searches and vehicles detected in the last 30 days.

In addition to the community engagement during the PSAB meeting, the Police Chief also had one-on-one conversations with community members and met with the Cafecito group.

In addition to the themes discussed above about individual privacy and potential inappropriate access to Mountain View data, the Chief heard **concerns about crime and public safety**, including:

- Disparate impact of property crime on less financially stable communities;

- Home break-ins disproportionately affecting Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) residents;
- Hit and run and other transportation safety concerns;
- Downtown and other areas being targeted for auto burglaries by organized criminals from other cities;
- Catalytic converter theft; and
- Organized retail theft.

City Council Review and Direction

On May 28, 2024, staff presented a recommendation to the City Council to authorize a one-year agreement with Flock Safety. Staff outlined the vendor selection process, the proposed program, the ALPR use policy (Policy 460), the deployment approach, fiscal considerations, and feedback received during the April 25, 2024, PSAB meeting. Before providing direction, Council heard comments from six members of the public and asked numerous questions to which staff responded at length.

Council questions related to:

- How access to data for Federal immigration enforcement purposes would be prevented;
- Whether Flock data could be subpoenaed by Federal or State agencies;
- How and for what purposes access would be granted to MVPD officers, how this use would be monitored, and how officers would be held accountable for compliance with MVPD; policy
- How sale of Mountain View data to data brokers would be prohibited;
- Criteria for successful implementation;
- Use of ALPR data for addressing crime and types of crime;
- How camera locations/numbers were determined, compared to other cities; and
- The reliability of Flock Safety.

Council deliberated and approved entering into an agreement with Flock Safety, with the following direction:

- Authorize the City Manager or designee to enter into a one-year agreement with Flock Safety for 24 Flock Safety Automated License Plate Recognition cameras for an amount not to exceed $96,800.

- Authorize the City Manager or designee to modify the agreement to change the number of Flock Safety Automated License Plate Recognition cameras and the location of the cameras within Mountain View as recommended by the Police Department.

- Authorize the City Manager and Police Chief to adopt Police Department Policy 460, "Automated License Plate Readers" ("ALPRs") with an update to include references to authority from outside agencies.

- Return to Council for approval of program continuation after the pilot year.

ANALYSIS

Flock Safety ALPR System Implementation

When the item was presented to Council, staff anticipated that developing operational procedures, setting up the system, and installing the cameras would be completed within 8 weeks of executing a contract with Flock Safety, but the installation took much longer than anticipated.

Camera Installation

Staff's initial recommendation was to install 24 Flock Safety cameras. Council authorized the City Manager or designee to change the number and location of cameras as necessary upon implementation of the system. The system design ultimately consisted of 30 cameras.

The camera installation process took significantly longer than expected, primarily due to adjustments to some camera locations as new options for using Caltrans poles were identified and the time required to meet City and Caltrans permitting requirements for using existing poles. The first camera was installed in August 2024 and there were no other cameras installed until late February 2025. Between February and March, an additional 11 cameras were installed, resulting in a total of 12 cameras. Camera installation continued to be slow. In May 2025, 21 (70%) of the total 30 cameras were in place. (The final camera was installed in January 2026.)

This delay in the system being fully up and running impacted the MVPD's use of the system and the timeframe for a one-year pilot period report back on the effectiveness of the program as a

public safety tool and its compliance with MVPD policy and procedure. MVPD command staff identified May 2025 as a milestone for substantive implementation of the program and planned to bring the one-year report to Council in May 2026.

MVPD Operational and Data Sharing Procedures

To ensure **appropriate use by MVPD personnel**, the Department established strict operational procedures and provided comprehensive training. All authorized personnel were required to complete a training program covering the system's technical use, relevant legal requirements, and department-specific policies and procedures. A core component of this training was the strict prohibition of data sharing for non-official purposes, reinforcing that the system is reserved exclusively for legitimate law enforcement use. To ensure ongoing compliance, the department established a network of Administrators and Subject Matter Experts to provide internal support, conduct system audits, and continuously evaluate program integrity.

To facilitate **appropriate access by outside agencies**, a rigorous multi-step process was established to manage data sharing, including the following procedures and requirements.

- Data Sharing Agreement: Agencies requesting access to Mountain View data were required to review MVPD's specific policies and sign a Data Sharing Agreement providing required information and agreeing to comply with MVPD's ALPR policies.

- Administrative Review: A department designee reviewed each signed agreement to ensure it met the City's requirements.

- Manual Authorization: Access required the Police Chief's designee's manual (rather than automatic) acceptance of a partnering law enforcement agency's data access request, only after acceptance of the signed Data Sharing Agreement.

- Public Transparency Page: Authorized agencies are listed on the City's public transparency page, which is updated every 24 hours.

System Configuration

MVPD personnel worked with Flock Safety's implementation team through numerous calls and onboarding sessions to discuss the configuration of the ALPR system, in accordance with the Department's operational expectations and policy requirements, including strict data protection policies. Additionally, Flock Safety representatives were present at both the PSAB and City Council meetings where the pilot program was agendized. During discussions with Flock Safety, staff outlined the Department's required access controls and data-sharing limitations. Access to Mountain View's ALPR data would be restricted unless explicitly approved, and any sharing

agency would be required to sign MVPD's ALPR sharing agreement before access could be granted.

Based on those communications, the Department believed the system would function in a turnkey manner, meeting its strict access control requirements. During the onboarding process, Flock Safety's team stated that sharing Mountain View's data would occur only with the MVPD's specific approval via the administrative dashboard. During tutorials and related training, Flock Safety representatives demonstrated that agencies requesting access would appear on the administrative dashboard for review and approval and that periodic email notifications would identify agencies with pending requests. Staff monitored the administrative dashboard and email and observed that these notifications were occurring during this pilot as described by Flock Safety. **At no time during the implementation calls, meetings, tutorial, onboarding, or related presentations was a Statewide or Nationwide Lookup tool discussed, demonstrated, or presented to MVPD as a configurable feature.**

Use of ALPR Data Investigating and Addressing Crime

As mentioned, the MVPD tracks and reports crime data on a regular basis. Table 1 below shows crime trends going back to 2022 when the Federal Uniform Crime Reporting Program (UCR) transitioned to the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), which classifies offenses differently. The data presented include burglary, both residential and commercial breaking and entering, larceny (general theft categories, including auto burglary), vehicle theft, robbery, and assault.

Table 1: Mountain View Crime Statistics, 2022-2025

Category	2022	2023	2024	2025
Property Crimes				
Larceny	1,043	1,306	1,707	1,867
Burglary/B&E	387	353	405	260
Vehicle Theft	190	185	188	113
Crimes Against Persons				
Assault	505	549	568	554
Robbery	48	62	47	41
Total	**2,173**	**2,455**	**2,915**	**2,835**

The use of Flock Safety ALPR data has become a significant tool for MVPD to respond to crimes impacting the community, from catalytic converter thefts and porch "pirates" to home-invasion burglaries.

Search, Alert, and Case Statistics

From the installation of the first Flock Safety camera in August 2024 through December 2025, MVPD personnel conducted approximately 24,743 searches in the Flock system. Starting in mid-August 2025, the Flock Safety system allowed MVPD to code searches by specified category. Since that time, MVPD personnel have performed 9,766 searches for the reasons shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: MVPD Flock Searches, September 2025 – January 2026

Search Category	**Number of Searches**
Property crime	5,786
Person crime	1,086
Stolen vehicle	589
Financial crime	551
Vehicle code violation	260
Missing person	168
Drug investigation	111
Welfare check	149
Other	1,066
TOTAL	**9,766**

The number of searches does not equate to the number of cases being investigated. MVPD personnel will often conduct multiple searches for any given vehicle of interest, covering different timeframes, geographic areas, vehicle descriptions, etc. as the information, scope, and direction of a case or area of inquiry evolves.

As shown in Table 3 below, MVPD ALPR cameras generated the following information in 2025.

Table 3: MVPD ALPR Camera Alerts, 2025

Number of Alerts*	Type of Alert	Description
794	Custom hotlist	When a Mountain View camera captures an image of a vehicle of interest to the MVPD
233	Stolen vehicle	When a Mountain View camera captures an image of a vehicle reported as stolen in the Stolen Vehicle System, a statewide database
51	Felony vehicle	When a Mountain View camera captures an image of a vehicle entered into the Stolen Vehicle System as being involved in felony vehicle activity.

** The number of alerts may include the same vehicle of interest being captured multiple times on one or more camera.*

Information from such alerts was instrumental in generating actionable leads, identifying suspects, and/or solving cases in over 200 cases, as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Number of Cases Using ALPR Data

Number of Cases	Type of Case
87	Commercial burglaries
65	Auto burglaries
42	Residential burglaries
41+	Suspects identified or arrested

**This data includes cases in which suspects committed crimes in the City of Mountain View and similar crimes in neighboring cities.*

Mountain View Case Highlights Using ALPR Data

Domestic Violence/Carjacking – Arrested

MVPD investigated a domestic violence incident in which a suspect injured a victim in Mountain View and carjacked her vehicle. Using Flock Safety cameras, officers tracked the vehicle into San Francisco, where the San Francisco Police Department apprehended the suspect following a coordinated request. Despite the suspect's extensive history of violence, the arrest was made safely and effectively, protecting the community from a dangerous individual.

Kidnapping Victim – Located

MVPD responded to a kidnapping report involving a suspect who threatened a victim's life in the presence of her family. Given the suspect's volatile behavior, there was immediate concern for the victim's safety. After entering the suspect's vehicle as a "hot list", MVPD officers tracked the vehicle into San Jose. Through a coordinated effort with the San Jose Police Department, the suspect was apprehended, and the victim was safely rescued and returned to Mountain View.

Auto Burglaries – Located/Arrested

Following multiple reports of auto burglaries at Shoreline Golf Park, the license plate of a suspect vehicle was identified. Later that evening, a Flock Safety alert notified patrol that the vehicle had returned to Mountain View. Officers intercepted the vehicle and detained the occupants, who were found in possession of stolen property from prior thefts and burglary tools. Both suspects were arrested on multiple charges, including auto burglary, possession of stolen credit cards, and conspiracy.

Auto Burglaries – Prevented

Officers assigned to a downtown burglary suppression detail were alerted to a string of auto burglaries in Palo Alto involving a specific suspect vehicle. Shortly after, MVPD received a Flock Safety alert for the vehicle, which was also confirmed stolen. Officers located the suspects in Mountain View as they were attempting another burglary. The suspects fled, discarding stolen laptops from the Palo Alto crimes in the process. This proactive intervention prevented further burglaries in Mountain View and led to the recovery of stolen property.

Stolen Vehicle Report – Located/Arrested

Two days after a vehicle was reported stolen from Mountain View, MVPD officers received an alert for the vehicle captured by a Flock Safety camera in Mountain View. Patrol units located the car and conducted a successful traffic stop. The driver was arrested and subsequently confessed to the theft.

Suspicious Missing Person – Located

Patrol officers investigated the suspicious disappearance of a woman and her two daughters from Mountain View after family members raised serious concerns for their safety. A Flock Safety camera captured the vehicle in Mendocino County, enabling local deputies to locate the family. After a welfare check, it was determined they were safe, and no further police assistance was required.

Commercial Burglaries – Suspects Located

The Crime Suppression Unit (CSU) investigated burglaries at a Mountain View liquor store and a restaurant, where the only initial lead was a sighting of a white sedan. Using Flock Safety data, detectives identified the vehicle's license plate, which led to a registered owner with an extensive history of theft and narcotics. Through regional collaboration and analysis of cellphone data, detectives linked two suspects to both Mountain View burglaries.

Mail Theft Ring – Apprehended

What began as a single report of mail theft escalated into a major, multi-jurisdictional investigation after Flock data identified a suspect vehicle. Following a Flock Safety alert from a Mountain View camera, MVPD officers conducted a traffic stop and arrested two occupants for possession of stolen property. Subsequent search warrants executed by detectives at four locations uncovered a massive volume of stolen mail. The suspects were ultimately linked to a mail theft ring spanning six counties and affecting over 588 individual victims.

Auditing of Flock System Use by MVPD

Throughout the ALPR pilot program, MVPD supervisors and managers assigned to the Flock Safety pilot program implementation regularly conducted audits to ensure MVPD personnel complied with all policies and procedures and used the Flock system effectively. This review consistently showed MVPD personnel were adhering to Department policy and using the Flock Safety system appropriately. Audits of external access to our system were also conducted at random intervals and did not reveal any evidence or indication of use inconsistent with MVPD policy.

As previously mentioned, the MVPD planned to present the one-year report on the pilot program to the City Council in May 2026. To prepare for this report, staff would conduct more extensive review of the outcomes of the MVPD's use of ALPR data to investigate, solve, and prevent crime and compliance with internal use and external sharing requirements.

Public Records Act Requests

In July 2025, MVPD received California Public Records Act Requests for data associated with the MVPD ALPR cameras. The requests were for Organization and Network Audit data. Organization Audits only contain data on searches conducted by MVPD personnel. Network audits contain all camera data for searches conducted by MVPD personnel and other authorized agencies.

In its raw form, Network Audit data can include many types of personal identifying information (PII) because authorized agencies follow their own department policies when entering search terms into the Flock system. For example, some law enforcement agencies enter victim names,

witness names, etc., and producing unredacted Network Audit data would have violated the privacy rights of those individuals.

The City has been producing these Network Audit reports, in addition to Organization Audit reports, on a rolling basis as they are finalized through the City's Next Request Public Records Portal. The City is committed to transparency and will engage in good faith to make records available to the public without jeopardizing the safety of victims or witnesses or compromising active investigations.

Review of Organization Audit data did not indicate any misuse of the Flock Safety system by MVPD personnel.

Discovery of Unauthorized Access

MVPD monitored news coverage of broad access to Flock Safety ALPR data across various locations. Initially, staff believed that City data was not affected and that these reports were related to other agencies purposefully sharing their information. MVPD continued to review searches by MVPD personnel, which were found to be in compliance with City policy. The Department also continued to review the process for responding to requests from and granting access to agencies located in California, and found these to be consistent with the City's established policy and process for sharing access with authorized partners.

During the Department's network audit of the first camera installed in August 2024, MVPD staff discovered that searches of Mountain View data had been conducted by agencies other than authorized partners. Staff talked with Flock Safety representatives and learned that Mountain View's system was not set up as intended. Rather, a "National Lookup" setting was enabled for three months from August to November 2024. It was later learned that a "Statewide Lookup" setting was also enabled from August 2024 until January 2026, unbeknownst to staff, before it was disabled by MVPD staff once they became aware of it. These settings allowed agencies outside and within California, respectively, to conduct searches without going through the City's process for granting access via explicit MVPD review and action.

The lookup settings are enabled and disabled with a single click through the system's administrative interface. During meetings with Flock Safety and law enforcement agencies, MVPD was informed that there is no way to determine how the settings were enabled or how the National Lookup setting was disabled. Administrative event logs to track such actions now exist, but this feature was added in late 2025.

In the three-month period in 2024 (during the prior federal administration), when the National Lookup setting was enabled, several federal law enforcement agencies conducted searches of Mountain View data from the one camera installed at that time. Flock Safety was unable to

determine whether any Mountain View data was obtained through these searches, as that auditing function also does not exist.

The National Lookup setting allowed for sharing ALPR data with Federal and other agencies outside California, which is prohibited by state law. In March 2025, Flock Safety disabled National Lookup for all California agencies.

Notably, staff have since learned that both the nationwide and statewide interfaces were enabled for many other agencies that were also unaware of them; MVPD is not an outlier in this regard.

MVPD's Responsive Actions

Transparency has always been a guiding principle of the MVPD. It was a significant blow to learn that the Department had inadvertently fallen short of ensuring the protections promised in response to community concerns about data privacy and potential misuse of Mountain View Flock Safety data by Federal and other external agencies. To make things right, demonstrate integrity, and rebuild trust, the Department took action as soon as the Department became aware of and understood what had occurred.

These actions included:

- Disabling the Statewide Lookup;
- Meeting with the media and providing a public statement;
- Having serious conversations with Flock Safety's executive leadership and development team about expectations, accountability, and system improvements;
- Turning off the Flock cameras until further investigation could be conducted and the City Council had the opportunity to provide direction;
- Issuing a letter to the Mountain View community sharing information about what happened, announcing the decision to turn Flock cameras off, and expressing the Police Chief's personal apology;
- Sharing information with other Bay Area law enforcement agencies; and
- Reflecting on "lessons learned" (as noted below).

Lessons Learned

Reflecting on the City's experience implementing, operating, and auditing the Flock Safety ALPR system in Mountain View, the Chief, Command Staff, and MVPD personnel have identified several lessons learned.

Dedicated System Oversight Role Prior to Deployment

Future technology implementations should include assigning a dedicated system auditor or program specialist before deployment begins. Developing system expertise concurrently with installation limited the Department's ability to fully evaluate complex administrative controls and configuration settings. A designated subject-matter lead should be responsible for system configuration validation, audit design, and vendor coordination from program inception. This role should be aligned with the staff responsible for installation and training, but should be specifically assigned to provide system-level oversight.

Expanded Pre-Implementation System Design Review

Pre-deployment evaluation should extend beyond user interface functionality to include a structured review of system architecture, permission structures, audit logs, configuration controls, and override pathways. System design validation should specifically assess auditability, traceability of access, and administrative control boundaries to ensure alignment with City policy requirements and City expectations.

Early-Stage External Access Auditing

Initial audit practices should include targeted reviews of external access conducted at the earliest stage of program deployment, when data volume is limited, and usage patterns are more readily evaluated. Earlier focused audits would have increased the likelihood of identifying access anomalies and configuration issues before system usage scaled.

The timeframe and data needed to conduct a compliance audit differ from those needed for an audit of program performance and outcomes. The former should start early and be ongoing. The latter requires the program to be substantially or fully functional for a reasonable operational period.

Scaled Deployment Aligned With Audit Capacity

Future program rollouts should be phased to align with system growth, audit capacity, and staff expertise. Evaluating controls and audit outputs while the system footprint and data volume remain manageable enables earlier refinement of oversight practices. Scaling should occur in parallel with demonstrated audit effectiveness and administrative control expertise.

Formal Vendor Communication and Configuration Review Cadence

Programs relying on vendor-managed platforms should establish a formal, recurring vendor communication and configuration review cadence, involving the appropriate vendor staff with the knowledge and ability to address City questions and concerns. This should include scheduled settings verification, documented configuration reviews, and required vendor notification of feature changes, access-control modifications, or system updates that could affect data access or audit processes. Configuration audits should occur at defined intervals regardless of whether operational changes are intended or needed.

Focused Audit Design

Audit protocols should be structured not only to summarize system activity, but to proactively detect potential misuse, policy deviations, or settings and configuration changes. Audit methodologies should be designed to purposely look for misuse rather than relying on general activity summaries. Audits should be conducted twice yearly and published on the MVPD's public transparency dashboard. Supporting data should be made available on the dashboard and redacted to remove any personal identifying information.

Interagency Coordination on Platform Oversight

Regular coordination with neighboring and peer agencies using the same platform can improve early detection of systemic configuration or vendor-side issues. Sharing audit approaches, findings, and control practices supports earlier identification of platform-wide risks and promotes consistent oversight standards.

NEXT STEPS

MVPD will continue to monitor and assess the availability, value, effectiveness, and appropriateness of existing and emerging tools and practices to support the Department's work. The department will continue to communicate with and listen to the Mountain View community to learn more about the concerns and expectations regarding preventing and solving crime, as well as protecting Mountain View residents from data misuse. Pending Council direction, staff will take appropriate steps to facilitate the removal of MVPD Flock cameras.

To facilitate this learning, the Police Chief will identify and work with Community Feedback Partners to engage in dialogue about the positive outcomes of the ALPR pilot program, lessons learned, and exploration of any future use of ALPR in Mountain View.

The MVPD will also collaborate with neighboring jurisdictions on a regional approach to identify and use appropriate tools to solve crimes and protect individual privacy.

FISCAL IMPACT

At its May 28, 2024 meeting, the City Council authorized a one-year agreement with Flock Safety for 24 ALPR cameras in the amount of $96,800 and authorized the City Manager or designee to modify the agreement to adjust the number and location of cameras within Mountain View as recommended by the Police Department. The final system configuration included 30 cameras, resulting in a total agreement cost of $105,650, which includes the cost of the cameras and a one-time infrastructure implementation fee of $7,650.

In July 2024, the City paid the annual agreement amount and the one-time implementation fee. In August 2025, one year following the installation of the first camera, City staff and Flock Safety negotiated a one-year renewal that included a six-month credit due to significant installation delays. As previously noted, staff planned to return to Council in May 2026 with a one-year program report timed from the installation of approximately 70% of the cameras in May 2025.

After application of the six-month credit, the City made an additional payment of $49,000 in September 2025, bringing the total payments under the agreement to $154,650. If the Council approves staff's recommendation to terminate the agreement with Flock Safety, staff will evaluate and pursue potential reimbursement for fees associated with the remaining term of the agreement, as appropriate.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Continue with the Flock Safety ALPR program with modifications.
2. Continue with the Flock Safety ALPR program without modifications.
3. Provide other direction.

LEVINE ACT

California Government Code Section 84308 (also known as the Levine Act) prohibits city officials from participating in any proceeding involving a "license, permit, or other entitlement for use" if the official has received a campaign contribution exceeding $500 from a party, participant, or agent of a party or participant within the last 12 months. The Levine Act is intended to prevent financial influence on decisions that affect specific, identifiable persons or participants. For more information see the Fair Political Practices Commission website: www.fppc.ca.gov/learn/pay-to-play-limits-and-prohibitions.html

Please see below for information about whether the recommended action for this agenda item is subject to or exempt from the Levine Act.

SUBJECT TO THE LEVINE ACT
☒ Material contract modification or amendment

PUBLIC NOTICING

The City Council agenda is advertised on Channel 26, and the agenda and this report appear on the City's website. An electronic notice was sent to the Police Chief's advisory bodies and other interested community stakeholders.

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