



Item No. 4 Town of Atherton

CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT – STUDY SESSION

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
GEORGE RODERICKS, CITY MANAGER

FROM: STEVE McCULLEY, CHIEF OF POLICE

DATE: MAY 6, 2020

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION AND DIRECTION ON THE PURCHASE OF
ADDITIONAL FLOCK AUTOMATED LICENSE PLATE
READERS (ALPRs).

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council discuss and provide direction regarding the purchase of an additional sixteen (16) Flock Automated License Plate Readers (ALPRs) and eight (8) ALPR warning signs.

BACKGROUND

At the March 6, 2019 Study Session, staff provided the City Council with an overview of ALPR (Automated License Plate Reader) and security camera technology. The presentation was designed to educate the Council about how the use of fixed ALPR and security cameras could assist the Atherton Police Department in deterring/solving crime.

At the October 2, 2019 Study Session, staff engaged the City Council in additional discussion about whether the Town might benefit from having its own fixed ALPR at various locations.

At the November 20, 2019 City Council meeting, Council approved the purchase of two fixed Flock ALPR units, which were installed (in January 2020) at the entrance and exit to Holbrook Palmer Park. These units would serve as a test and staff would report back to the Council on their functionality, usefulness, and possible installation at other locations.

ANALYSIS

The Flock ALPR cameras located in Holbrook Palmer Park have proven to be a valuable investigative tool. At HP Park, there are limited vehicular ingress/egress options (one way in and one way out) which allows just two cameras to be effective.

Staff believes that Flock ALPR cameras placed at strategic locations around Town will add a significant investigative option that will help solve/deter crime in Atherton's neighborhoods. Placing ALPR cameras along the Atherton borders will provide law enforcement investigators with a pointer system that can help to identify vehicles associated with suspects, witnesses, or victims, and to develop exculpatory information that assists them with focusing their investigative resources. The data also allows law enforcement to connect serial criminal activities that may have occurred in disconnected law enforcement jurisdictions.

Staff originally surmised that it would take 27 ALPR cameras to cover the Town's primary entrance and exit points. However, after making an effort to minimize costs and maximize the camera's abilities by placing them strategically along the Atherton borders, Staff has determined that 16 cameras, along with signage, would be sufficient to start. After approximately one year, staff can reassess and determine if additional cameras are needed.

- Middlefield Rd = 4
- Alameda = 4
- Valparaiso = 2
- Marsh = 1
- Atherton Ave = 2
- Selby Lane = 2
- Ringwood/Bay = 1

Total- 16 ALPR Cameras

In addition to the 16 ALPR cameras located along the Atherton borders, Staff believes that the presence of additional ALPR cameras in an around the backstreets will further increase the chances of identifying a vehicle used in the commission of a crime. Thus, staff seeks to form a Public/Private partnership opportunity with any resident interested in purchasing a Flock ALPR camera. In short, a private resident would fund single or multiple Flock ALPR cameras and the Atherton Police Department would assume the administrative responsibilities associated with the camera's operation. Staff has already been approached by residents in the Lindenwood and Lloyd Park neighborhoods who expressed interest in this proposed collaborative crime solving effort.

Signage: Part of the ALPR deterrent process is signage. Although there is a standard red and white sign that is placed on every Flock Camera pole mount, Staff recommends 8 additional 24" x 30" ALPR warning signs placed at or near the main entrances to Town (as well as the possibility of a smaller version of the same sign on each camera pole):

1. Marsh Road
2. Alameda/Valparaiso
3. Alameda/Stockbridge
4. Middlefield/Bay
5. Middlefield/Ringwood

6. Middlefield/Encinal
7. ECR/Selby
8. Selby/Selby

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that Council authorize the purchase of 16 Flock ALPR Cameras, for a total cost of \$32,000, plus \$1,200 for eight (8) 24" x 30" ALPR camera warning signs. These costs would be incorporated into the FY 2020/21 Budget.

POLICY FOCUS

The investment in additional Flock ALPR cameras will ensure that the Town is equipped with technology that can help to identify vehicles associated with criminal activity, thus deterring and helping to proactively suppress criminal misconduct in Town.

The addition of a public/private partnership between the Police Department and Atherton residents willing to purchase Flock ALPR cameras would be a cooperative effort intended to decrease the level of criminal activity in Town.

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost for sixteen (16) Flock Cameras is \$32,000 (\$2,000 each). There are no installation fees. The Finance Director has confirmed the vehicle replacement fund (Account Number 610-40-57004-040) will support the purchase of sixteen (16) new Flock automated license plate readers.

The cost of six (6) 24" x 30" ALPR camera warning signs would be approximately \$900. Total approximate costs - **\$32,900.**

Possible Additional Costs: During the installation of the Flock ALPR cameras at HP Park, staff discovered that the cameras need sufficient sunlight to function. With that in mind, there may be an additional power source requirements for some installations. One of the challenges associated with a power requirement is that power isn't always readily available, thus increasing the installation costs. Installation costs for power hook-ups are the responsibility of the purchaser, and are not included in the \$2,000 per camera fee.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notification was achieved by posting the agenda, with this agenda item being listed, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting in print and electronically. Information about the project is also disseminated via the Town's electronic News Flash and Atherton Online. There are approximately 1,200 subscribers to the Town's electronic News Flash publications. Subscribers include residents as well as stakeholders – to include, but be not limited to, media outlets, school districts, Menlo Park Fire District, service providers (water, power, and sewer), and regional elected officials.

COMMISSION/COMMITTEE FEEDBACK/REFERRAL

This item ____ has or X has not been before a Town Committee or Commission.

- ☐ Audit/Finance Committee (meets every other month)
- ☐ Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee (meets as needed)
- ☐ Civic Center Advisory Committee (meets as needed)
- ☐ Environmental Programs Committee (meets every other month)
- ☐ Park and Recreation Committee (meets each month)
- ☐ Planning Commission (meets each month)
- ☐ Rail Committee (meets every other month)
- ☐ Transportation Committee (meets every other month)
- ☐ Tree Committee (meets each month)

ATTACHMENTS

Flock PowerPoint presentation.



FLOCK License Plate Readers



HP Park Flock Cameras



Excellent Resolution

- This patrol vehicle was pre-programmed on the “Hot List.”





Lessons Learned From Installation

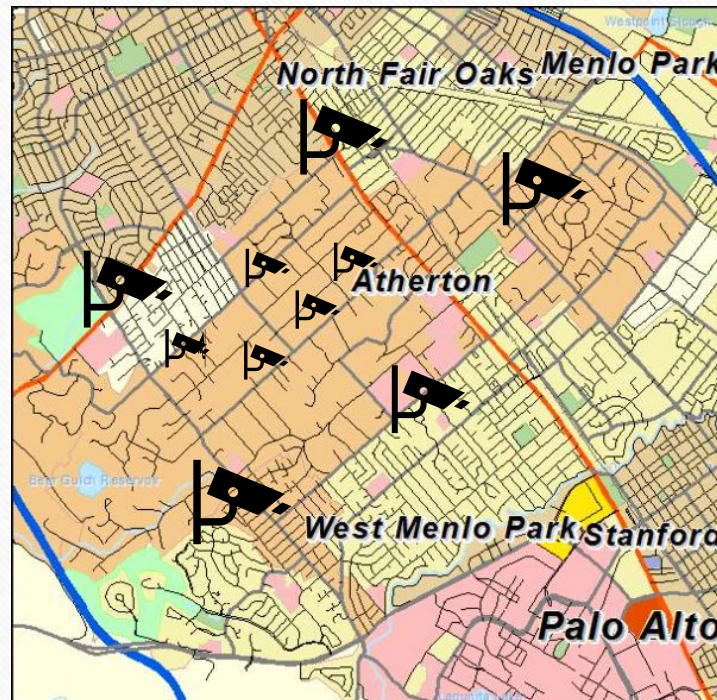
- Sufficient Sunlight is needed!



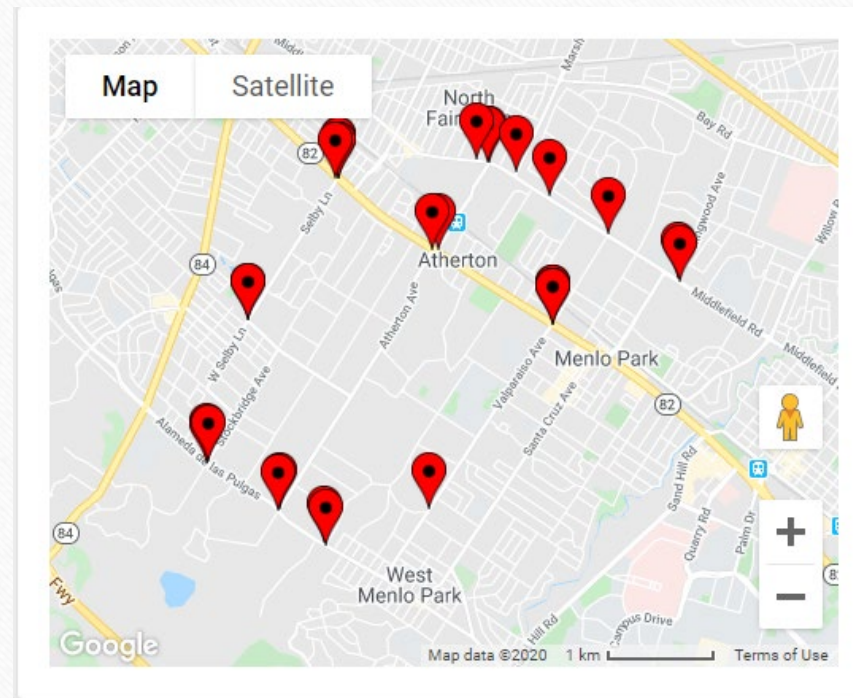
Lessons Learned Cont'd

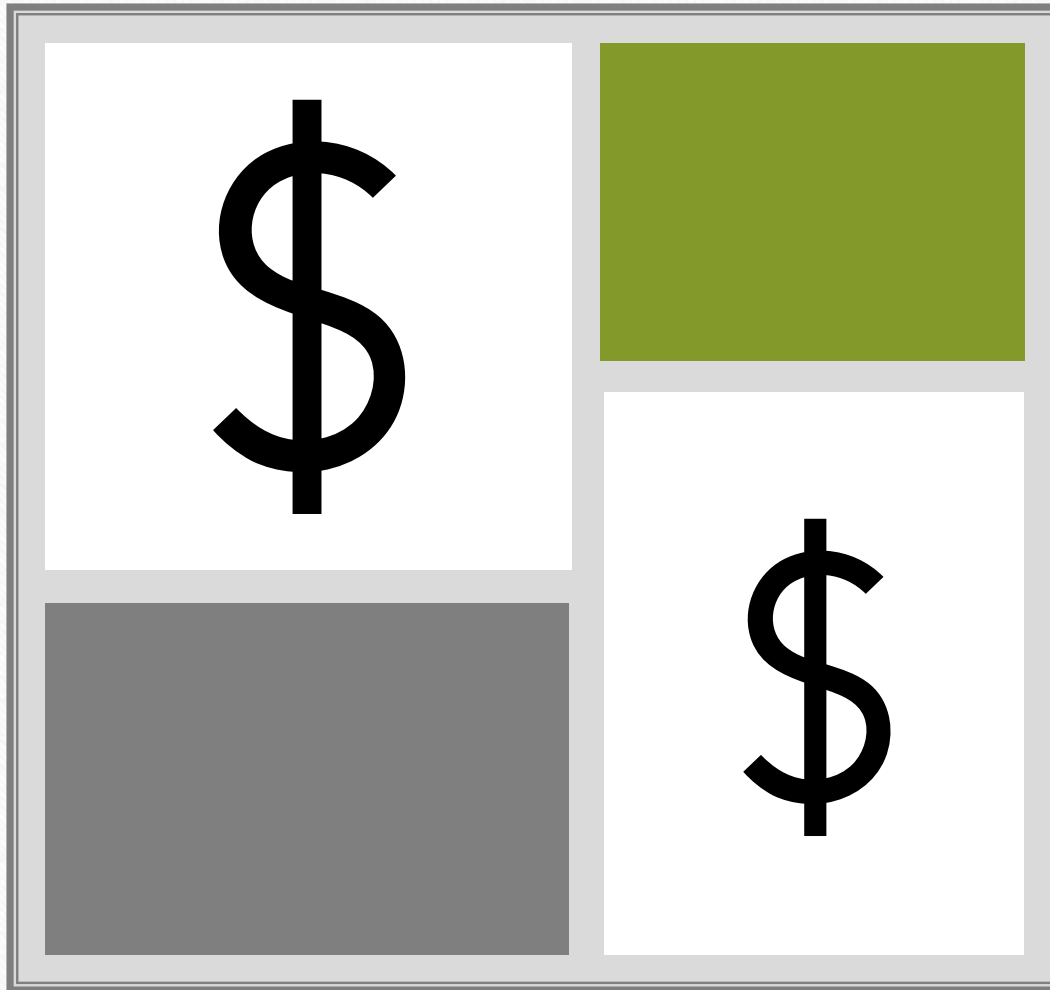
- Power isn't always located in a convenient place!

The more cameras, the more coverage...



Proposal One- 27 Locations



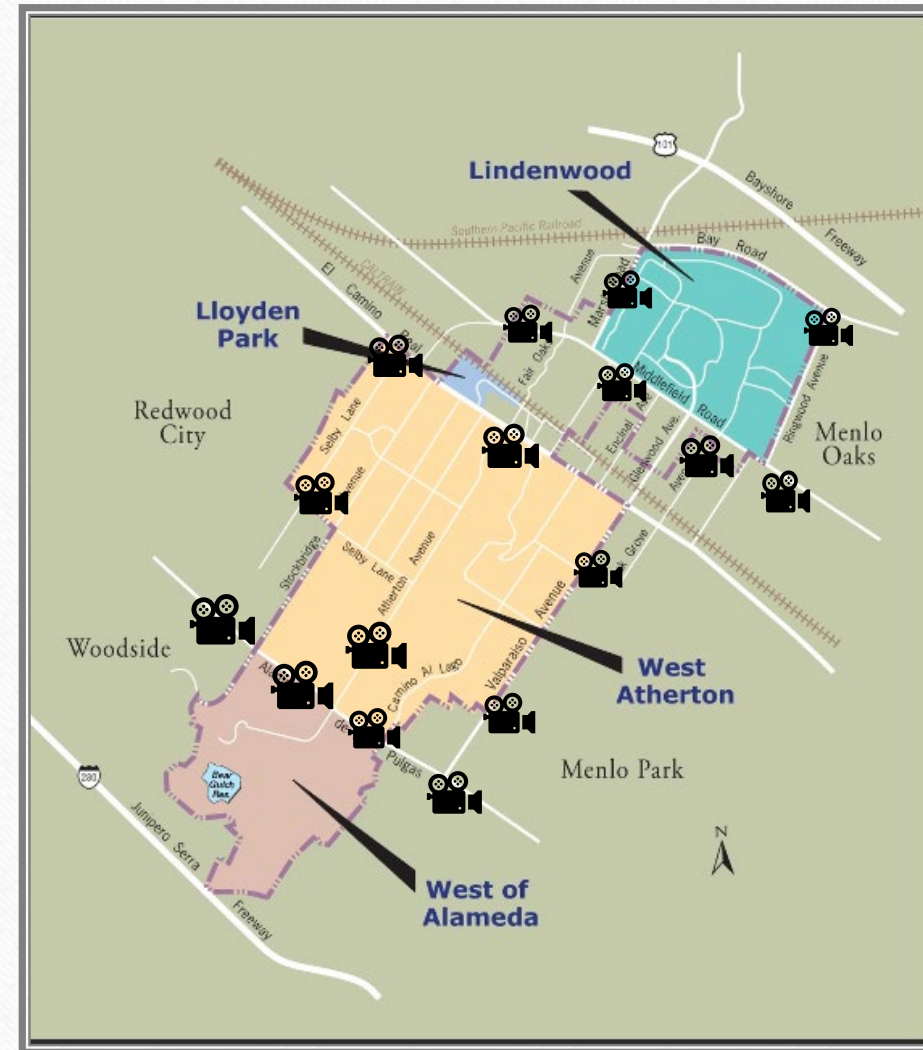


Proposal 1 Costs

- 27 cameras at \$2,000 each = **\$54,000 annually**
- Covers all the major entrances/exits into and out of Atherton

Proposal 2

- 16 cameras placed strategically around the Atherton perimeter:
- Middlefield Rd = 4
- Alameda = 4
- Valparaiso = 2
- Marsh = 1
- Atherton Ave = 2
- Selby Lane = 2
- Ringwood/Bay = 1



A large, bold, black dollar sign (\$) is positioned on the left side of the slide, partially cut off by the edge. A horizontal green line extends from its base across the slide.

Proposal 2 Costs

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- 16 cameras at \$2,000 each = **\$32,000 annually**
- Covers just the main arteries through Town
- That's \$12,000 in saving annually, **AND** we still get pretty good camera coverage around Town

Camera Signage



Proposed Signage



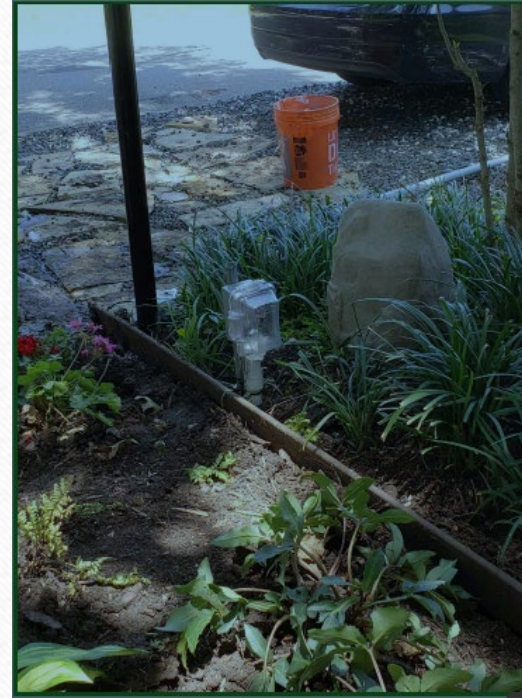
Private Party Cost

- \$2,000 for each camera unit
- Additional fees: power hook up (additional \$300-800- weatherproof outlet box and lock)- one reason to find the best spot for solar power!
- Increased pole height- Flock standard issue is 8' pole...can get taller 12' pole for an additional \$250

Recommendation

- 16 cameras at \$2,000 each = **\$32,000 annually**
- Covers just the main arteries through Town
- That's \$12,000 in saving annually, **AND** we still get pretty good camera coverage around Town

What would it look like?



Questions?

