

MEMORANDUM



FLOSSMOOR

TO: Bridget Wachtel, Village Manager

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FROM: Keith D. Taylor, Deputy Chief of Police

DATE: 02/05/24

SUBJECT: Consideration to Purchase License Plate Reader Cameras

The use of vehicles to facilitate the commission of crimes is prevalent nationwide. Cameras with License Plate Reader (LPR) technology have been used by law enforcement officials to help solve multiple crimes throughout the country and here in the Village of Flossmoor. The LPR cameras provide visuals of the vehicles, the registered owners' information, displays its direction of travel, and when used in conjunction with other strategically placed LPRs and surveillance cameras, can outline the vehicular travel path of a suspect(s) before, in some cases during, and after the commission of a crime. The LPR cameras can also be set to send alerts to our police officers when a vehicle passes by that has been reported stolen, was used in an abduction of a child, when the registered vehicle owner has a warrant for their arrest, and other law enforcement related information. Flock Safety, a license plate reader and surveillance camera company, has allowed the Flossmoor Police Department (FPD) through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), to have access to data from its LPR and surveillance cameras that are placed in other villages that border Flossmoor for the past two and a half years. Those villages include Homewood, Country Club Hills, Olympia Fields, Hazel Crest, Chicago Heights, Thornton, and others. The data, which is purged from their system after thirty days if not flagged for investigation, have been used to identify vehicles and charge suspects in shootings, burglaries, vehicular hijackings, homicides, and other less serious offenses that have occurred in Flossmoor. Flossmoor does not currently have any LPRs of its own within its boundaries. The Flock MOU ended on January 01, 2024. If the Village of Flossmoor does not procure its own LPR cameras soon, the FPD will no longer have access to the data from Flock Safety's network of more than 3,400 LPRs nationwide. This would greatly hamper the investigative efforts of our officers and detectives. Our Investigations Unit is currently comprised of two detectives. LPR cameras are force multipliers and greatly assist our detectives in conducting more efficient investigations and in gathering more independent and indisputable evidence. The LPR cameras help identify suspects more rapidly and can aid our officers and detectives in capturing suspects before they can commit more crimes.

The Cook County State's Attorney's Office (CCSAO) must approve charges against a suspect(s) who has committed a felony (i.e. vehicular hijacking, murder, aggravated battery with a firearm). Obtaining video evidence from LPRs and surveillance cameras has proven crucial and often times mandatory in the approval of felony charges by the CCSAO for suspects who commit violent crime. Over the past few years, there have been multiple suspects who have committed homicide and other violent crimes against persons in Flossmoor and surrounding jurisdictions, that have frequented, resided, or reside in Flossmoor. The investigations of these crimes often resulted in the CCSAO denying or suspending these cases due to a lack of being able to track their movements in and out of Flossmoor via vehicle.

Following are eleven strategic locations throughout the Village of Flossmoor the FPD believes would be ideal for LPR camera placement:

- (1) Flossmoor Rd. and Sterling Ave. (covers east & west bound traffic)
- (2) Crawford Ave. at Vollmer Rd. (northbound)
- (3) Flossmoor Rd. at Crawford Ave. (eastbound)
- (4) Western Ave. at Vollmer Rd. (northbound)
- (5) Sterling Ave. at Heather Rd. (both directions)
- (6) Governors Hwy. at Heather Rd. (northbound)
- (7) Kedzie Ave. at Flossmoor Rd. (northbound)
- (8) Governors Hwy. at Vollmer Rd. (northbound)
- (9) Flossmoor Rd. at Dixie Hwy. (westbound)
- (10) Kedzie Ave. at Vollmer Rd. (northbound)
- (11) Dixie Hwy @ Vollmer Rd. (northbound)

These locations, in conjunction with LPRs from the villages that border Flossmoor will cover all of the entry/exit points of Flossmoor. The FPD also endeavors to obtain Flock Safety as our vendor for LPRs due to the fact that bordering and other local law enforcement agencies currently use Flock Safety LPR cameras. Having one system multiple agencies can use significantly reduces the amount of time needed to conduct criminal investigations by precluding the need for an investigator to have to travel to another police department to view camera footage or wait for an investigator from another department to have time to review LPR data related to a FPD investigation.

In October of this year, the FPD applied for and received an award of \$85,000 from the Illinois Attorney General's Organized Retail Crime Grant. The grant can be utilized for overtime police security details to cover our retail corridors and to purchase equipment such as LPR cameras that are relevant to combating retail crime. The FPD is requesting a budget amendment that adds the Illinois Attorney General's Organized Retail Crime Grant award in the amount of \$85,000 as a revenue with an account number of 01-00-3-465. FPD is also requesting permission to purchase eleven LPR cameras from Flock Safety and place them at the aforementioned locations utilizing funds from the grant that will cover the purchase and installation of the cameras, and the first year of the annual plan that includes the cost of accessing the system's data. The subtotal for Year 1 is \$38,450.00 and the annual recurring subtotal is \$34,400.00. The initial term of the contract is 60 months and the total cost for the 60 months contract is \$176,050. The cost of \$38,450.00 for the cameras and first year of service will be covered by funds from the Organized Retail Crime Grant. This reduces the overall amount we are requesting for the remaining 48 of the 60 months contract to \$137,600.

In conclusion, the Flossmoor Police Department endeavors to continue to leverage technology to assist us in providing our residents with the highest quality and the most efficient service possible. Strategic placement of LPR cameras throughout the Village can serve as a deterrent to criminals, has proven to be an effective investigative tool in identifying suspects, preserving evidence, and assisting in the prosecution and conviction of offenders who use vehicles to commit crime. With this in mind, the Flossmoor Police Department has three recommendations for the Board. First, I recommend a budget amendment that adds a line item entitled "Illinois Attorney General's Organized Retail Crime Grant" that reflects the award of \$85,000 as a revenue with an account number of 01-00-3-465. Secondly, I recommend the Village Manager be authorized and directed to execute the agreement with Flock Safety on behalf of the Village. Lastly, I recommend a budget amendment under Contractual Services that adds a line item entitled "LPR Annual Contract" with an account number of 01-48-4-660.