



Surveillance Technology Working Group

Office of Accountability, Performance & Innovation

To try to help address some of the common questions that have been received regarding the Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) technology, we have put together the following Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) information to try to provide more information in some of these areas.

1. Where will this data be stored?

- a. The City is still looking at potential vendors and at this time, May 2023, it is not yet decided if the storage would be in cloud servers or on premises servers.

2. How is the data accessed?

- a. The following procedure will be followed when making requests for ALPR data by SPD personnel pertaining to investigations:
 - i. Members shall make requests for ALPR data in writing to their Commanding Officer.
 - ii. Members shall reference the use of ALPR data in their investigations in the appropriate investigative report completed by the member.
 - iii. For record-keeping purposes, all approved requests shall be sent to the Compliance Unit for proper filing and tracking.

3. How long will this license plate data be retained? Why was the range of 14 days to 6 months given as the potential range?

- a. The City is in the process of determining the amount of time that license plate data can be stored, which is why a range was given. Pre-existing SPD policies stipulate a maximum of 30 days but this may be revised.

4. Where will these cameras be placed?

- a. The list of locations for the proposed 26 ALPR cameras can be viewed [HERE](#).
- b. To help community members be able to view these locations better, we have mapped these latitude and longitude coordinates provided on the public map [HERE](#)

5. What will the criteria be to turn these cameras on?

- a. If approved, these cameras would operate continuously, scanning and recording the License plate numbers of any vehicle that drove by the reader.

6. Will this be a pilot program or will it be a full-time program?

- a. If approved, the ALPR would be a full-time program.

7. Will the images taken be used to issue traffic tickets?

- a. No this will NOT be used for traffic enforcement.

- 8. Will the images from these cameras be available to members of the public to help with insurance claims?**
 - a. The same as COPS Cameras, Syracuse Police Department will only release information from these devices in civil matters when there is a court order requesting this information.
- 9. What will the repercussions for staff that might access this data for non-law enforcement purposes?**
 - a. This would be a breach of SPD policies and would lead to an internal SPD investigation and/or a possible criminal investigation. It is worth noting that access to the database generates a permanent log trail which can be audited at any time.
- 10. Will these ALPRs be placed on vehicles or placed around the city?**
 - a. The proposal from the SPD is for placing 26 ALPR cameras on free standing poles around the city, and not for additional ALPR cameras on vehicles.
- 11. We already have a lot of cameras around Syracuse with the Criminal Observation and Protection System (COPS) Cameras, why do we need more?**
 - a. These camera systems serve two different purposes. The COPS cameras can be used to help document criminal activity and help identify suspects. If a vehicle was used in a crime and recorded on a COPS camera, SPD staff will have to go through the footage from surrounding COPS cameras to see if that vehicle passed any other of the nearby areas. This can be time intensive. The ALPR cameras would allow for SPD staff to be notified as soon as a vehicle on the “Hot List” drove by an ALPR.
- 12. Is the goal of this technology to cast a wide net and record lots of community members license plate data, to have on hand if needed later? Or is the goal to only have a specified “Hot List” of license plates that the SPD is looking out for and to send an alert if any of these license plates are scanned?**
 - a. The goal is to assist detectives and officers with investigations. Whether it be a stolen vehicle, a missing or endangered person or to solve a crime. The searches can be directed at a specific vehicle or can be used to see what vehicles were in an area of a crime when it occurred.
- 13. Does New York State law govern the archiving of community members DMV records?**
 - a. Yes, the relevant New York State Education Department policies regarding retention periods is
here: <https://www.archives.nysed.gov/records/using-data-storage-vendor>
- 14. How were the 26 locations selected? What evidence is there that it is likely criminals will be driving on Interstates 81 or 691?**
 - a. The locations were selected by the detectives and COPS camera operators to determine where the ALPRs would be of the most use.