



Legislation Text

File #: WA RES 24-03, **Version:** 1

TOWN STAFF REPORT RECCOMENDATIONS

Consider approving WA Resolution 24-03 authorizing the expenditure of funds to Flock Group, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$116,000 for Flock Security Cameras at all Town of Westlake entrances and Westlake Academy; and take appropriate action (Wade Carroll, Town Manager)

STAFF: Wade Carroll, Town Manager

BACKGROUND:

On September 25, 2023 Council Member Tim Shiner requested that Town Staff worked with a reputable license plate reading (LPR) camera system to be installed in the Town of Westlake to reduce and deter criminal activity with Westlake. The future agenda item request was seconded by Council Member Dr. Anna White. CM Shiner had stated that Trophy Club had installed cameras which greatly reduced crime in their Town. Town Manager Carroll stated that this was correct as he was the Town Manager in Trophy Club at the time that the cameras were improved and installed, stating that the cameras were installed at all entrances to Trophy Club. Staff worked with the Keller Police Department and Flock Group, Inc. who is the leading LPR camera system in North Texas and is utilized by neighboring agencies to properly locate the cameras.

The LPR system takes a picture of the rear end of a vehicle when activated by the vehicles motion across the camera's field of view. The Flock system registers the make, model and color of the vehicle and the license plate number and compares that information to secure federal and state data banks which hold information on stolen vehicles, active arrest warrants, Amber and Silver Alerts. If the information matches information in the data banks Keller PD is alerted within 30 seconds of the vehicle passing by the camera. Keller PD can then locate the vehicle and investigate the situation. This system has been used successfully in many cities in our area to lower crime statistic and deter criminals from entering their municipality. The operating system is cloud based and stored on servers owned by Flock Group but the data belongs to the Town of Westlake. Data that is not downloaded from the system to be used in an active investigation is permanently deleted from the system 30 days after received.

Cameras in Westlake are planned at each entrance to Town and each entrance to the Westlake Academy totaling 30 cameras. Cameras have a limited field of view and can only see 2 lanes of traffic. Some larger intersection requires the installation of multiple cameras to ensure that every vehicle that enters the Town or enters the Westlake Academy property passes by an active camera. The Flock information can be accessed by any police agency that has been cleared to obtain sensitive police data. Flock utilizes a transparency portal which gives citizens information on how many vehicles were scanned each month, how often vehicle hits were sent to Keller PD, how often and why the data was accessed by Keller PD or other agencies. This helps to ensure that the system and its data is not abused. If approved a policy similar to the Keller PD policy will be written and enforced on camera data use by the Town of Westlake and/or its representatives and other police agencies prior to the installation and activation of the LPR system.

DISCUSSION:

Flock LPR system is the sole source of the software used to collect and compare data received from the cameras to the national and local NCIC data bases and has been used in many area municipalities to reduce and deter crime. An article from Trophy Club is attached that outlines some of the successes they have seen with the camera use. In the short time the cameras were up in Trophy Club while I was Town Manager they had 17 Felony Arrests, most related to drug and violent crimes, and 1 life saved from an overdose and an arrest made for human trafficking due to cameras notifying police about vehicles with warrants in their town.

Data is not stored indefinitely and is deleted after 30 days of capture unless downloaded and used for an open investigation. Data is owned by the Town but is not stored by the Town and is sensitive in nature and therefore not subject to open records requests. Only NCIC approved agencies and representatives can access this data. Town employees that are not NCIC certified cannot access data. Flock Group, Inc. guarantees that information collected cannot and will not be monetized

FISCAL IMPACT:

This would be an unbudgeted item that would require a budget amendment of approximately \$116,000 in year one that would be transferred from the General Fund balance, with an annual reoccurring cost of approximately \$90,000 in the General Fund budget.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of WA Resolution 24-03, as presented.