BRIEFING FOR LOCAL OFFICIALS

25 QUESTIONS BEFORE YOU RENEW AN ALPR SYSTEM

Useful technology still deserves a real renewal review.

A renewal vote should not be reduced to "Has it ever helped solve a case?" These questions help officials evaluate necessity, effectiveness, privacy, error, cost, governance, and the municipality's ability to exit.

PURPOSE & EVIDENCE

- What specific local problem is this system intended to solve?
- What evidence shows ALPR is the right response rather than a narrower alternative?
- What measurable outcome would count as success?
- What result would cause us not to renew?
- What local evidence shows the system has materially improved those outcomes?

TECHNOLOGY & DATA

- Exactly which camera, software, video, search, and analytics products are included?
- What information is captured or derived from each vehicle observation?
- What is the actual local routine-retention setting?
- What can be preserved or exported beyond routine retention, and where does it go?
- Which advanced search or analytical capabilities are enabled locally?
- What additional capabilities can be enabled later without another public vote?

THE FOUR-LAYER CHECK

Vendor capability = what the product can do. Local configuration = what this customer has enabled.
Written policy = what users are allowed to do. Actual use = what the records show really happened.

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ACCESS & SHARING

- Which local roles have access, and how many active user accounts exist?
- Does every search use an individual account and documented investigative reason?
- Who reviews audit logs, how often, and what happens when a search looks improper?
- Which outside agencies can access locally generated data?
- What outside ALPR data can our users search?
- Can federal or out-of-state agencies access the data, directly or through sharing?
- Who can change sharing settings, and does that require public or supervisory approval?

ERRORS & SAFEGUARDS

- What verification is required before officers act on an ALPR alert?
- Does the department track false reads, stale alerts, or incorrect stops?
- Who may create local hot-list alerts, how are they approved, and when do they expire?
- What training, access restrictions, and consequences address misuse?

CONTRACT & EXIT

- What is the full cost, including future years after any grant funding ends?
- What are the term, automatic-renewal, notice, and termination provisions?
- When the relationship ends, what happens to data, accounts, sharing, and physical hardware?

MINIMUM RECORD PACKET BEFORE A RENEWAL VOTE

- Current executed agreement, order form, amendments, and incorporated terms.
- Current ALPR policy and retention setting.
- Current sharing/partner configuration or the best available official summary.
- Local effectiveness, error, audit, and cost information used to justify renewal.

GOOD ANSWERS DO NOT OBLIGATE YOU TO RENEW.

Strong safeguards are better than weak ones. Real investigative value should be acknowledged. Officials can still decide that routine, networked, searchable tracking of ordinary vehicle movements creates more surveillance power than the community should maintain.

Read the sourced discussion and contract checklist: DeFlockMetroDetroit.org/for-local-officials/