

**City of Santa Barbara**  
**Automated License Plate Recognition Policy**

*Adopted September 28, 2020*

*Updated January 9, 2024*

**What is it:** Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR) technology utilizes cameras to capture and store digital images of license plates and uses character recognition algorithms to identify license plate characters. An ALPR system creates a searchable computerized database resulting from the data collected by fixed cameras located at the entrance/exit of numerous City-operated public parking lots, and vehicle-mounted or handheld cameras for on-street parking spaces designated as priced or paid parking. ALPR system data includes license plate numbers as well the date, time, and location when the image was collected.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to define the City's appropriate use, maintenance, collection, security, and retention of all ALPR information, and the authorized users of the City's ALPR technology, in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws. This policy is separate from any ALPR technology used by the Santa Barbara Police Department (SBPD). The SBPD maintains their own policy for ALPR.

The City of Santa Barbara utilizes ALPR technology to capture, analyze, and store digital license plate data and images to enable the rapid identification of vehicles in support of parking operations and compliance activities. ALPR shall supplement or replace paper tickets to log the times at which a vehicle enters or exits a City parking lot in order to determine the fee due upon exit. ALPR and customer license plate data shall also supplement or replace proximity access cards and permit stickers to grant lot entry to monthly and annual parking permit holders.

License plate information paired to vehicles entering City-operated public parking lots is used to improve access control and the enforcement of City parking ordinance violations in the lots that utilize ALPR. For example, information on vehicles coming into a lot is anonymized and aggregated to analyze various metrics including parking patterns, permit-type usage, and compliance.

**Restricted Uses:** The City only uses ALPR technology to collect license plate data within public view. The City does not use ALPR technology for the purpose of monitoring individual activities that are otherwise protected by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. The cameras shall not be used in areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy, and shall not be used to harass, intimidate, or discriminate against any individual or group.

**Training:** Pursuant to California Civil Code Section 1798.90.51(b), all authorized users

shall receive training prior to being granted access to an ALPR system and data. A record of all completed training is maintained by the respective City departments. ALPR operators receive initial training from the vendor providing the ALPR software and hardware. The training includes the procedure and proper use of the system prior to being granted access to an ALPR system. In addition, each user also receives an annual refresher training from the Program Manager or designee. The training includes:

1. Applicable federal and state law;
2. Functionality of the equipment; and
3. Safeguarding of password information, access to ALPR systems, and ALPR information.

**Access:** Authorized users with access to ALPR data shall include staff with a City operational need to specifically oversee such a system and/or are responsible for parking operations and enforcement within City Departments including Public Works, Waterfront, and Airport, as well as City-contracted parking operations and enforcement vendors. The Program Manager for each City Department employing an ALPR system is the custodian and head administrator of its ALPR systems and their operation. The only individuals with access and the ability to query data in the system are:

- Program Manager, and their designee(s);
- Parking Supervisors;
- Parking Coordinators;
- Parking Resources Specialist;
- Parking Office Specialist;
- Waterfront Operations Manager;
- Downtown Plaza and Parking Manager;
- Harbor Patrol Supervisor;
- Airport Patrol Supervisor;
- Harbor Patrol Officers; and
- Airport Patrol Officers.

All logins and queries are stored and monitored, and contain the following information:

- Username;
- Date;
- Time;
- Purpose of query; and
- License plate and other criteria used to query the system.

This data shall be stored and monitored by each respective Department's Program Manager, Harbor Patrol, Airport Patrol, Parking Services, and Parking Operations staff. License plates are only referenced against the respective Department's Annual Parking/Parking Permit vehicle database, and tickets generated at the entrance columns.

The Program Manager or their designee also run periodic audits to ensure access to the data was made by authorized persons for authorized uses.

**Information Collected:** The following information may be collected by the ALPR system:

- License plate image captured;
- License plate number;
- License plate state;
- Date;
- Time; and
- Location.

**Information Stored & Data Retention:** ALPR data shall be sent to and stored in the ALPR vendor's regional database. The database stores license plate numbers of monthly and annual parking permit holders and hourly customers. This information is used by the ALPR system to allow permit holders to gain entry to the City parking lot for which their permit is valid and to exit without having to provide payment. The permit holder's license plate number is used to supplement or replace proximity access cards, plastic hang tags, stickers, and other permit materials.

Routine data collection for ~~Airport and Waterfront parking~~ shall not be stored beyond 30 days, ~~and for Downtown parking 72 hours~~ except when lawfully required by court order. After the aforementioned retention times elapse, the vendor shall purge routine data records. The data records stored on the regional ALPR server include photographs of the vehicle (close-up of the license plate and context photo of the rear of the vehicle), and accompanying license plate number, date, time, and location in the field; such records do not directly identify a particular person.

**Security:** The City of Santa Barbara uses administrative, operational, technical and physical safeguards to protect ALPR information from unauthorized access, use, destruction, modification or disclosure including the following safeguards:

- **Administrative:** Username and password-protected access to the ALPR system. The system shall document all information accessed by username, and the database usage shall be monitored and audited.
- **Operational:** Training system users on proper use and secure practices when using ALPR and its database.
- **Physical:** All network equipment and servers containing sensitive data are maintained in a secure off-site location, and accessed only by authorized personnel. This includes the secure storage of computers with access to the off-site database.
- **Technical:** All information is encrypted to protect any personally identifiable information. ALPR system workstations and servers shall be updated with the latest security patches on a regular basis. ALPR data shall be secured, encrypted, and backed up regularly.

In the very unlikely event of an information breach that constitutes a violation under California Penal Code Section 502, all individuals who are believed to be affected or

have their information compromised shall be notified by the City of Santa Barbara, via the affected City Department(s).

**Quality Assurance:** Collection of ALPR data is automated so the license plate images and details of collection are included in the system without review. Although infrequent, license plate translation may be incomplete or inaccurate. The Program Manager or their designee ensure accuracy and correct license plate translation errors when identified. Users also confirm the computer translation prior to taking any action based on ALPR results.

**Releasing ALPR Data:** The City does not share ALPR information with any commercial or private entity, other than City parking contractors and enforcement vendors, as necessary to conduct City parking operations. The City includes confidentiality provisions in its agreements with any parking contractors and/or vendors to prohibit any use or distribution of ALPR information for any purpose other than the authorized Uses under this Policy. Information gathered or collected and records retained by the City of Santa Barbara must not be:

- Sold, published, exchanged, or disclosed for commercial purposes.
- Disclosed or published without authorization.
- Disseminated to persons not authorized to access or use the information.

~~The City shall provide ALPR data to a federal, state, or local law enforcement agency or any other public agency only if a warrant or other court order is issued and served.~~ The City shall provide ALPR data to a federal, state, or local law enforcement agency for use in criminal investigations or to respond to public safety incidents upon receipt of a request that contains a case or incident number. In addition, information gathered shall not be disclosed to the public or in a civil matter unless such disclosure is required by law or court order.

**Requests for Images from Members of the Public:** Persons that have a court order or preservation letter, and are interested in requesting ALPR data, are directed to the Santa Barbara City Clerk's Office. Persons that do not have a court order or preservation letter and are interested in requesting ALPR data are also directed to the Santa Barbara City Clerk's Office.

**Enforcement:** Violation of this Policy by a City employee, contractor, or other authorized user, may lead to suspension or termination of that user's access to the ALPR system.