



# CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

## COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

**AGENDA DATE:** September 29, 2020

**TO:** Mayor and Councilmembers

**FROM:** Airport Department  
Public Works Department  
Waterfront Department

**SUBJECT:** Automated License Plate Recognition Policy For City Operated Off-Street Parking Facilities

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That Council approve a policy that governs the use of Automated License Plate Recognition systems for the management of off-street parking operations in City facilities.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The Airport, Public Works, and Waterfront Departments have jointly developed a written policy governing the use of Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR) systems for management of parking operations in City facilities, pursuant to the requirements under California Civil Code Section 1798.90.51. The proposed policy outlines Department processes for using ALPR systems and data to manage City parking facilities. The policy also ensures that the collection, management, use, maintenance, and dissemination of ALPR information is protective of individuals' privacy, security, and civil liberties to the limit allowed under the law.

### **DISCUSSION:**

The City of Santa Barbara manages 7,360 parking spaces in its lots located at the Waterfront, Airport, and within the Downtown corridor. Departments use access and revenue control systems to collect parking fees, control lot access, and ensure customer compliance with rules and regulations. Parking technology is advancing rapidly, and most new Parking Access and Revenue Control Systems (PARCS) and enforcement systems incorporate ALPR technology to optimize the collection of revenue and enhance the customer experience.

An ALPR-equipped PARCS uses specialized cameras to capture images of license plates. These images are fed through programs that use character recognition algorithms to convert the images into computer-readable data that is stored in a database, which can then be used for many different applications. In parking lots, ALPR technology is typically

used for access control, revenue collection, and improved customer service. Mounted cameras capture license plate data as vehicles enter and prior to exiting the parking facility. The data captured upon entry and exit is used by the system to calculate the fee due or automatically lift the gate if the vehicle is within the complimentary period. The ALPR system can also allow parking permit holders to pass into and out of lots without having to pull entrance tickets or pay fees upon exit. The license plate number takes the place of the traditional access card, hang tag, or permit sticker.

ALPR systems can improve customer service and parking management by:

- Reducing customer wait times at entrance and exit;
- Reducing or eliminating customer penalty charges for lost tickets;
- Improving revenue collection by preventing abuse of complimentary parking periods;
- Improving management of permit parking programs and creating a simpler, more efficient permitting process for customers;
- Simplifying revenue recovery and billing for customers unable to provide payment upon exit; and
- Facilitating the use of mobile payment options.

California Civil Code 1798.90.51 requires the City, as a public ALPR operator, to adopt a usage and privacy policy in order to ensure that the collection, use, maintenance, sharing, and dissemination of ALPR information is consistent with respect for individuals' privacy, security, and civil liberties. Civil Code Section 1798.90.55 also requires that the City provide an opportunity for the public to review and comment on this Policy at a Council meeting.

Accordingly, the Waterfront, Airport, and Public Works Departments have jointly developed a draft City of Santa Barbara ALPR Policy (Policy) to govern any future use of ALPR systems in City parking operations. This proposed Policy is separate from existing policies that govern Police Department uses of ALPR technology. The proposed Policy follows the requirements under Civil Code sections 1798.90.5 to 1798.90.55 by requiring the following:

- **Defines the authorized uses for the ALPR system.** The Policy authorizes City departments to use ALPR in support of parking operations and compliance activities. The Policy prohibits the City from using ALPR data for monitoring individuals, and prohibits the use of ALPR cameras in areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy.
- **Specifies which City employees and contractors are authorized to access the ALPR system.** Access to ALPR systems is limited to City staff in the Airport, Public Works, and Waterfront Departments who oversee or are responsible for parking operations and enforcement.

- **Outlines training requirements for City staff authorized to access the ALPR system.** The Policy requires all authorized users of ALPR systems to receive training prior to being granted system access, and refresher training each year thereafter.
- **Describes how ALPR systems will be monitored to ensure the security of information and compliance with applicable privacy laws.** The Policy requires ALPR systems to store information about all logins and data queries. These data points will be monitored and periodically audited by the Department's designated Program Manager to ensure access to the data is made by authorized persons for authorized uses only.
- **Defines the purposes of, processes for, and restrictions on the sale, sharing, or transfer of ALPR information to other persons or agencies.** The Policy prohibits the sale, publication, exchange, or disclosure of ALPR data for commercial purposes, the unauthorized disclosure or publication of ALPR data, and the dissemination of ALPR information to unauthorized persons. The City will provide ALPR data to Federal, State, or local law enforcement agencies only if a warrant or subpoena is issued.
- **Defines the title of the official custodian, or owner, of the ALPR system responsible for implementing Civil Code requirements for ALPR systems.** The Policy designates the Program Manager in each department as the official custodian of that Department's ALPR system, and assigns responsibility for implementing Civil Code requirements to that individual.
- **Describes the reasonable measures used to ensure the accuracy of ALPR information and correct data errors.** The Program Manager or their designee will review ALPR data for accuracy and correct license plate translation errors when identified. Authorized staff will confirm the computer translation of license plate characters prior to taking any action, such as applying fees or penalties, based on ALPR results.
- **Describes the length of time ALPR information will be retained, and the process the ALPR operator will utilize to determine if and when to destroy retained ALPR information.** The Policy requires the City or their vendors to purge ALPR data after 30 days, unless otherwise required to be maintained longer by law.

At its September 10, 2020 meeting, the Downtown Parking Committee (DPC) received a staff report on the proposed ALPR Policy. The public also had the opportunity to comment on the Policy. The DPC recommended that the Policy be forwarded to Council for review and adoption with a modification to clarify that disclosure of ALPR data to all law enforcement agencies requires a warrant or subpoena. This change has been incorporated into the draft.

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

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**SUBMITTED BY:** Henry Thompson, Airport Director  
Brian D'Amour, Acting Public Works Director  
Mike Wiltshire, Waterfront Director

**APPROVED BY:** City Administrator's Office