



Austin Police Association
"Serving Those Who Serve"

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Mayor Adler and Council Members,

The purpose of this letter is to express the Austin Police Association's support for the Department's request for reinstatement of the funding and equipment for the license plate reader (LPR) program. The APA supports the utilization of the license plate readers, leveraging 21st Century technology to provide enhanced measures increasing overall public safety.

The decision to remove the formerly effective and successfully operated LPR program has impacted the ability of investigators to the detriment of victims of a variety of crimes to include: homicides, robberies, sex crimes, kidnappings, domestic violence, auto theft, and burglary. The LPRs are designed to use high-speed cameras and computer software to convert vehicle's government issued license plates to data that is used in connection with regulated state and national criminal databases.

The Department's capability of using the high-tech LPR system often times increases the possibility of identifying and apprehending a known or suspected violent criminal. The Department previously utilized the technology in a manner consistent with the respect for individuals' privacy and constitutional rights. The Department had a policy in place setting specific parameters and guidelines for the operation of the LPRs and the use of the associated data. It also proactively addressed any possible misuse of the system/data with routine compliance audits.

LPRs were previously used to successfully locate and arrest many violent criminals and auto thieves. The tool has been instrumental in recovering hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of vehicles that were reported as stolen and properly entered into the state or national criminal database. They have been used to quickly determine a location of a vehicle involved in a kidnapping or amber alert for a child who is in danger.

As the crime trends in the City of Austin continue to rise, it is important the right tools are provided to our first line responders and investigators to aid them in the mission to deter crime, to locate and apprehend violent criminals, and to provide a complete investigation that will aid prosecutors in their mission to hold the criminals accountable with evidence beyond a reasonable doubt.

I hope everyone will give the Department's request serious consideration and reinstate the LPR program.

Sincerely,

Ken Casaday
President