

RESOLUTION NO.

1 **WHEREAS**, license plate readers gather objective and unbiased facts about
2 vehicles; and
3

4 **WHEREAS**, license plate reader technology focuses solely on extracting
5 empirical data, primarily the license plate numbers which Texas state law requires
6 to be affixed to every vehicle; and

7 **WHEREAS**, license plate readers only record the vehicle make, model, and
8 license plate number of a vehicle; and

9 **WHEREAS**, license plate readers are not a "live camera" and cannot be
10 used for surveillance, traffic enforcement, or any other purpose; and

11 **WHEREAS**, these cameras do not capture images of vehicle drivers; and

12 **WHEREAS**, maintaining the privacy of the data collected through license
13 plate readers is paramount; and

14 **WHEREAS**, the license plate readers historically used by the Austin Police
15 Department are categorically objective and cannot collect information in ways that
16 discriminate against any resident in the City; and

17 **WHEREAS**, the use of license plate readers assists police departments
18 across the country by increasing their investigative efficacy while reducing
19 unnecessary delays in pursuing leads; and

20 **WHEREAS**, camera data helps solve crimes when crimes occur; and

21 **WHEREAS**, license plate readers previously helped the Austin Police
22 Department locate stolen or wanted vehicles, vehicles connected to AMBER

23 Alerts, Silver Alerts, missing person reports, abductions reports, and vehicles
24 connected to other crimes; and

25 **WHEREAS**, the use of license plate readers bolsters the capability of local
26 law enforcement to act and apprehend criminals swiftly, leading to the deterrence
27 of crimes; and

28 **WHEREAS**, re-introducing license plate readers to the Austin Police
29 Department will help reduce crime, will prevent residents and visitors to the City
30 from being victimized, particularly from car and property thefts, and will lead to
31 deterrence of crime; and

32 **WHEREAS**, license plate readers can notify Austin Police Department
33 officers within seconds that a license plate has passed within the device's range,
34 allowing Austin Police Department officers to take immediate action in furtherance
35 of public safety; and

36 **WHEREAS**, the Texas Penal Code creates a criminal offense for an officer
37 or other public servant who intentionally or knowingly misuses information from
38 the license plate reader with the intent of obtaining a benefit, harming, defrauding,
39 oppressing another person, or disclosing the information for a nongovernmental
40 purpose that has not otherwise been made public; and

41 **WHEREAS**, the Austin Police Department's General Orders include rules
42 on the Security and Release of Records and Information, General Conduct and
43 Responsibilities, Racial or Biased Profiling, Responsibility to the Community, and
44 other orders to ensure officers keep private or confidential information secure,
45 know and comply with laws, do not engage in racial or biased profiling, perform
46 their services in an impartial and equitable manner, and provide equal and fair

47 protection of all rights under local, state, and federal law for all members of the
48 community; and

49 **WHEREAS**, a violation of General Orders provides cause to discipline a
50 police officer under Section 143.052 of the Texas Local Government Code and
51 Rule 10 of the Rules of Procedure for the Firefighters', Police Officers' and
52 Emergency Medical Service Personnel's Civil Service Commission; **NOW,**
53 **THEREFORE,**

54 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:**

55 The City Council directs the City Manager to identify funding in the amount
56 of \$114,775.00 that can be used for the license reader program in the Fiscal Year
57 2021-2022 budget and return with any actions that are necessary for Council to
58 authorize this expenditure.

59 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

60 Council directs the City Manager to include authorization for continuation of
61 the license reader program for Council consideration during the upcoming budget
62 adoption for Fiscal Year 2022-2023.

63 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

64 The City Council directs the City Manager to re-evaluate the Austin Police
65 Department's former policy and/or procedure on license plate readers; work with
66 the Office of Police Oversight and coordinate a minimum of two community input
67 sessions related to the policy; and take appropriate steps to ensure the policy and/or
68 procedure includes, but is not limited to, the following safeguards.

- 69 1. Data used for the license plate reader program will be kept for a
70 maximum of 30 days and destroyed thereafter. License plate reader
71 data that is related to a criminal case or investigation may be stored in
72 a criminal case folder for that case or investigation for longer periods
73 as needed. One year from the passage of this Resolution, the Austin
74 Police Department will return to Council to provide an evaluation of
75 the 30-day data retention policy and its effectiveness.
- 76 2. Data sharing will only occur for investigating and/or prosecuting
77 criminal activity for APD. If a circumstance arises where the City is
78 required by state or federal law to share the information at the request
79 of a state or federal agency for another law enforcement purpose, then
80 APD will not grant direct access to the database, but will supply the
81 requested information for a specific case or investigation to the extent
82 legally possible. If the City receives a request for information that is
83 broader than a specific case or investigation, then APD will report that
84 request to the Office of Police Oversight, Mayor, and Council prior to
85 sharing any information.
- 86 3. Annual training of all Austin Police Department personnel will be
87 conducted on the policies and restrictions concerning license plate
88 reader camera use and data, including how to properly respond to
89 requests for data from other law enforcement agencies.
- 90 4. The City Manager will post the Austin Police Department's usage and
91 privacy policy regarding license plate readers on the City's website.
- 92 5. No person will be the subject of police action because of actual or
93 perceived race, color, religion, creed, sex, gender, gender identity,

94 sexual orientation, age, national origin, ethnicity, disability, veteran
95 status, marital status, partnership status, political affiliation or beliefs,
96 and, to the extent permitted by law, alienage or citizenship status,
97 when license plate reader data is used.

98 6. Unless there is a criminal nexus, officers will not use license plate
99 reader data for the purpose of investigating persons who are
100 exercising their First Amendment rights, including freedom of speech,
101 assembly, and exercise of religion, such as attending political rallies,
102 public demonstrations, and religious gatherings.

103 7. A license plate reader alert alone, does not create reasonable suspicion
104 to justify a traffic stop or the detention of an individual. Before
105 making a stop or detention, the officer must: 1. Make a visual
106 confirmation that the license plate matches the information captured
107 by the license plate reader and reported in the last alert; and 2.
108 Confirm the license plate information with the National Crime
109 Information Center / Texas Crime Information Center.

110 8. The license plate reader data collected by the Austin Police
111 Department will not be used for the purpose of collecting traffic fines,
112 warrant roundups, or any other similar purpose of generating revenue
113 or collecting money owed by the public.

114 9. The Austin Police Department will use best practice and data security
115 including, but not limited to:

- 116 A. Role-based access to limit database access to specific officers,
117 who are ordered to operate in compliance with policy or else be
118 subject to disciplinary action; and
- 119 B. Designation of a Chief Security Officer with responsibility for
120 the following: receiving daily alerts on attempts to log in,
121 limiting access to the license plate database for only permissible
122 use, and/or regularly monitoring access to data stored under this
123 provision; and
- 124 C. Other best practice provisions related to data security for data
125 storage, including the most secure options available for
126 maintaining data.

127 The City Manager is directed to consult with the City of Austin Chief
128 Security Officer in the development of these provisions.

129 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

130 The City Council directs the City Manager to ensure the Austin Police
131 Department Chief takes appropriate steps to implement changes to the former
132 policy and/or procedure and restore the Austin Police Department's license plate
133 reader program by October 1, 2022, if funding is appropriated by Council for this
134 purpose.

135 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

136 The City Council directs the City Auditor to review or hire an external party
137 to audit APD's ALPR audit process and review the license plate reader data and
138 program. This will be done with assistance from the Austin Police Department, and

139 to the extent allowed by law, information obtained by the audit and review will be
140 shared with the City Council’s Public Safety Committee, the Office of Police
141 Oversight, and the Public Safety Commission. Except for law enforcement
142 sensitive information and information considered to be confidential by law, either
143 constitutionally, statutorily, or by judicial decision, the audit and review will be
144 posted on the City’s website for the public to view. The audit shall be provided to
145 the City Council by end of the pilot program. This audit shall include, but not be
146 limited to:

- 147 A. How, why, and by whom the devices were used;
- 148 B. When and the number of times the devices were used;
- 149 C. Number and locations of cameras used;
- 150 D. Action(s) taken due to the device; and
- 151 E. Demographic information on who the devices were used on.

152 The location of the cameras shall not be posted on the City’s website or
153 subject to public disclosure unless required by state or federal law.

154 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

155 The program’s pilot will automatically cease at the end of fiscal year 2023,
156 unless further extended by Council. Four months prior to the cease of the pilot

157

158 program, the City Manager will present recommendations on the continuation of
159 the program to Council during a work session, with action to be taken at the
160 following Council meeting.

161

162 **ADOPTED:** _____, 2022 **ATTEST:** _____

163

Myrna Rios
City Clerk

164

165

DRAFT