CVPD's Automated License Plate Reader Program (ALPR)

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Overview

- Community Concerns
- Program Timeline
- History of Automated License Recognition Systems
- CVPD’s program overview
- Moving Forward
- Success stories

Community Concerns

- Invasion of privacy/infringement of privacy rights
- Violations of state law related to data sharing
  - CA Values Act - SB54
  - SB34
- Retention of data
- Misuse/abuse of the system
- Sharing of immigration data
- Real time tracking of individuals
- Among others……

CVPD ALPR Program Timeline

- **October 2007** – City Council approves CVPD proposal to purchase and deploy 3 ALPR camera systems
- **February 2011** – City Council approves additional purchase of a 4th ALPR camera system
- **October 2017** – CVPD moves ALPR program from 3M/PIPS to Vigilant Solutions
- **July 2020 -** City Council approves grant funding to purchase two additional ALPR camera systems.
- **December 2020 -** Data sharing with ICE and USBP is suspended pending staff report to council

CVPD ALPR Program Outreach

- **January 2021**– Department presents/discusses ALPR program to Human Relations Commission
- **March 2021 -** Staff ALPR report presented to City Council
- **April 2021 -**Community forum on ALPR program

- In addition to the above, Chief Kennedy has both reached out to and or spoken to other community members and groups about the ALPR program

What are ALPRs?

- Originated in the United Kingdom in the mid 1970's.
- In use by law enforcement worldwide since around 2001.
- About 75% of US agencies use some sort of ALPR system. Most SD County Agencies use them in some capacity
- ALPR systems are digital camera systems paired with software to identify license place numbers. The cameras have limited range.
- Images contain only the date/time and location the image was taken.
- Officers may manually search images for specific license plates.
- Images are retained 1 year from date taken, unless tied to specific crime.

What ALPR Data looks like

These are actual ALPR images of my Department vehicle (the license plate has been obscured)





CVPD's ALPR Program

- Attached to 4 marked patrol cars.
- Used by patrol officers on availability basis
- System has two functions
  - Comparison of license plates to those entered into other existing databases (Missing/wanted persons, stolen vehicles etc.). Cars have a display for any hits.
  - Manual search for license plates/vehicles related to criminal investigations, requires secure log in, separate from the vehicle display.
- The search function is used once a person of interest has been identified, and or when there is no information and officers are looking to see if there are any leads to follow up on.
- Searches cover both Law Enforcement databases and Commercial Databases

  *Commercial data is voluntarily shared with Law Enforcement

Access and Security

- 2-hour training session required before system access.
- Access is controlled by a supervisor.
- All user access is defined and controlled by existing Federal and State laws and by policy from. **Official Law Enforcement Purpose Only + Right & Need to know**
- System administrators are supervisors or managers
- All searches must include an official reason for the search
- Access and search history are recorded and can be audited, as required by law
- “Regular” audits are required by law. CVPD policy requires quarterly.
- The Department is regularly audited by the Federal Government to ensure compliance with laws governing database security, database usages and access, and training. The ALPR program falls under these audits.

Data Sharing

- CVPD can choose to:
  - Share data
  - Not share data
  - Customize or restrict the scope of sharing
- Sharing of data does provide access to all of CVPD's data.
- Sharing means that specific searches within the LEARN database will include and matching CVPD images if they exist
- Shared data consists of the image, date, time, and location only
- Data sharing is a valuable tool for law enforcement as crimes occur across jurisdictional boundaries.
- ALPR data is shared with other County Agencies as part of the MOU with ARJIS.

Moving Forward with ALPR

- CA Department of Justice Audit (February 2020) recommends best practices:
  - Policy
  - Data Retention
  - Access Control
  - System Administration
  - Data sharing

- Human Trafficking/Fentanyl concerns
- Rise in violent crimes
- Proven, widely used law enforcement tool
- Finding the Balance

Success stories

- Located a missing at-risk person because an ALPR image provided detectives a starting point and time to narrow their focus.
- Made several arrests in a homicide investigation because an ALPR image provided detectives a location frequented by the suspects.
- **Used the system to identify the suspect truck in a fatal hit and run.**
- Located a suspect in a countywide fraud and theft series when detectives notices the same car was in the area every time crimes were committed. ALPR data allowed them to query cars in the area when the crimes occurred
- **Located a fugitive child molest suspect who was swapping cars frequently to avoid capture. A confidential tip about his new car allowed detectives to use ALPR data to locate frequent scanned locations. They waited for him nearby and made an arrest**
- Detectives broke up a fentanyl smuggling ring that was using unsuspecting border crosser's cars. Provided with a vehicle description, using ALPR data, were able to find a matching car and observe the suspects removing the fentanyl
- And many, many others

Questions?