

Memorandum

To: HPOA Board

From: Byrne Conley, HMDAC

Date: 10/13/2021

Re: Flock Cameras

The HMD Advisory Committee has been discussing with the City of Vallejo the City's deployment of "Flock" cameras. These are license plate-reading cameras that take still photos of passing cars, focused on license plates and provides information about the make, color and year of the vehicle. The license reader information is sent to a database that can be shared by designated Flock users, which would, for example include the Vallejo police department and other departments.

The information is used for law enforcement purposes; to track stolen vehicles, and to search for information when a crime has been reported. For example, if a person drove into Hiddenbrooke and burglarized a home or auto, and we knew the approximate time of the crime, the police could search the data based in just a few minutes (compared to the hours now required to view tapes from the Welcome center Video) for cars exiting and entering on the Parkway during the time period.

The license plate data can be filtered, for example looking for a license that is not a regular user of the Parkway. Homeowners could also register their vehicles so the system knows that the license belongs to a Hiddenbrooke homeowner. Conversely, if a person objects to such information being gathered on them, there is an "opt out" provision under which the scanned information is not sent to the database.

Currently, we have a video system set up at the Welcome Center, but it is old technology, not tied to any database; in the event of a crime, and HPOA representative would have to watch hours of "tape" in the hope of finding something helpful for the police. The Flock system would replace this – it would be leased by the City and tied to the police department, for police use only. Stolen car list are in the database and would issue an alert whenever a Flock camera spots a stolen vehicle.

The City Council authorized the City to purchase 80 of these cameras for distribution throughout the City. One is planned for Hiddenbrooke. The City PD is interested in seeing whether HPOA would support using HMD funds to cover the cost of a second camera so that we have one on the inbound lanes of the Parkway, and one on the outbound lanes. Of course, the City could allocate two to us, but the PD is trying to recover some costs from other funds (in this case, HMD) to stretch the budget and cover more areas. The Mare Island Maintenance District is covering some costs, on the same notion, after a citizen's advisory group endorsed the idea. Other private entities such as Kaiser are also funding cameras.

The HMDAC has had a lot of discussion about this and we support the idea of “sponsoring” a camera from HMD funds. The cost for one camera is \$2500 per year, (plus an initial installation fee of \$200) but \$2000 per year if two are ordered together, and we assume that the City is negotiating a fleet price for the larger order of 80 cameras.

Down the road, it is possible that the annual lease price could go up, of course, and further it is possible that the City cuts back on general fund money to pay for cameras. Even if HMD was paying for both cameras, however, the cost is relatively small.

A sign would be posted indicating that a camera is operating; hopefully this would have a deterrent effect.

It is our view that HPOA should not be involved in owning or leasing the cameras directly. We do not want to be involved in any privacy issue disputes, and would not be reviewing the photos or data in any event, as they are for police use. But in connection with having a Welcome Center and patrols, this would help to enhance security in Hiddenbrooke against crime.

If the Board agrees, we would send the following to Jason Lacey at the City (he supervises the Maintenance Districts):

Dear Jason;

This is to advise that the Hiddenbrooke Property Owners Association supports the use of Hiddenbrooke Maintenance District funds to defray the cost of one of the Flock cameras the Police Department would like to install on Hiddenbrooke Parkway. We understand that the PD intends to fund one of the cameras from a general fund allocation made by the City Council, for 80 cameras throughout the City. The PD indicates that a second camera would be helpful (to capture time and information on outbound and inbound lanes alike) but is also trying to stretch the budget for spreading the cameras throughout the City, and hoping to tap resources outside the general fund to help with the project.

The initial estimated cost is about \$2000 per year to lease a camera. We assume there are volume discounts as well. But, we think a contribution from HMD on the order of \$2000 per year for this purpose would be money well spent, and enhance the operation of the Welcome Center.

Our understanding is that the City would be the lessee of the cameras, and they would be tied to the Police Department. HPOA would not be monitoring the information, in fact would not need to access it at all, since the purpose is to contribute to the database for police use.

HMD wonders if the City could allocate 1-2 flock owls at the entrance in addition to the Welcome Center cams to capture illegal activity now or in the future? HMD is interested in having cameras positioned there following Captain Potts recommendation.