

Sgt. Betsy Brantner Smith
Spokesperson
NationalPolice.org



September 15th, 2022

Dear Council Member Kelly:

As an education and advocacy group, part of our mission is to encourage public officials to work proactively with law enforcement to benefit the community. To that end, the National Police Association would like to encourage the Austin City Council to reinstate, fund and support the license plate reader program.

Staffing of both police officers and 911 dispatchers continues to be a concern for the Austin community, and the targeted use of automated license plate readers (ALPR) can assist both patrol officers and investigators in an economical and efficient manner. Like body worn cameras, ALPRs are commonplace in urban and suburban police departments, and incredibly helpful. For example, in New Orleans PD rolled out ALPRs in 2017 and within the first month cameras accounted for the discovery of 29 stolen vehicles.

ALPR technology has helped American law enforcement solve many serious crimes over the past 15 years including the kidnapping of a 12 year old girl in San Jose, CA and the murder of a sheriff's deputy in Maricopa County, AZ. ALPRs are a commonly used tool that will help eliminate human error and ensure that data collection and recordkeeping are fair, equitable and unbiased. ALPR programs continue to prove their worth around the nation, and the people who live in and visit the City of Austin deserve police officers who have every available resource to help keep every Austin community safe from crime. We strongly recommend their use.

Sincerely,

Sgt. Betsy Brantner Smith (ret.)