Recommendation to Council

Austin Technology Commission

Recommendation:

The City of Austin shall discontinue use of automated license plate readers, or Automatic License Plate Readers (ALPRs), in all of their forms, defined as data non-consensually collected from citizens where the city or citizens do not have transparency into data collection and/or data handling, especially location data or other personally identifying information that allow for the historical recreation of an individual citizen's movements or daily activities.

Description of Recommendation to Council:

WHEREAS, ALPRs are known to collect significantly higher amounts of data from the public than what is ultimately used beyond its primary purpose; and ~~for public safety; and~~

WHEREAS, Austin city council has passed the TRUST act, legislation designed to curtail the types of surveillance that is outside of the public interest; and

WHEREAS, Our neighboring municipality, Pflugerville, has discovered that their citizens' data was accessed by hundreds of outside agencies not authorized by Pflugerville police department; and

WHEREAS, Several other neighboring municipalities such as Manor, Leander, and Bastrop have also discontinued their ALPR programs as the public has raised concerns around privacy and improper data access; and

WHEREAS, There are several documented cases of misuse of public surveillance technologies by law enforcement and non-government individuals; and

WHEREAS, ALPR training scenarios have included monitoring protests, a vital First Amendment protected activity

WHEREAS, The City of Austin discontinued its contract with an ALPR company; and

WHEREAS, The City of Austin must be accountable to the public in its contracting and vendor agreement terms, including data privacy and handling conditions; and

WHEREAS, data storage from these systems is not required beyond the milliseconds to validate if said data is involved in an ongoing investigation,

WHEREAS, third party technology contracts that lead to the storage of citizen data in databases not subject to city control or oversight limit the city's ability to ensure that the

handling of said data is secure and managed in a way consistent with the desires of the public

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Technology Commission recommends that the Austin City Council adopt policies eliminating the use of mass surveillance tools such as ALPRs, in any current and future vendor contracts.