

Public Statement Regarding Flock Safety Cameras in Holden

The City of Holden is committed to protecting public safety while respecting the privacy and civil liberties of our residents. As part of that commitment, the City currently utilizes Flock Safety license plate reader (LPR) cameras to assist law enforcement in preventing crime, locating vehicles connected to criminal investigations, and developing investigative leads when crimes occur.

Flock cameras capture information about vehicles traveling on public roadways, including license plate numbers, vehicle make and model, color, body type, and other visible identifying characteristics. They also record the date, time, and location where a vehicle was observed.

A common question we receive is whether these cameras use facial recognition technology. Based on both the City's contract with Flock Safety and Flock Safety's published information, the answer is no. Flock states that its Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) system does not use facial recognition technology and does not identify drivers or passengers. Searches are based on vehicle information and characteristics, not on people's faces. The City's contract references license plate recognition, Vehicle Fingerprint™ technology, vehicle make and color identification, real-time alerts, and machine learning software, but no facial recognition capabilities were identified in the agreement.

The technology does incorporate artificial intelligence and machine learning, but those tools are applied to vehicles rather than individuals. Specifically, the system uses computer vision and machine learning to read license plates, identify vehicle characteristics, search by vehicle appearance, and generate alerts when a vehicle associated with a criminal investigation, missing person case, or public safety concern is detected. No facial recognition functionality has been identified in the City's contracted system.

Approval and Implementation Process

The acquisition of the Flock camera system was discussed through multiple public meetings before implementation.

Discussion of the Blue Shield Grant began during a Public Safety Committee meeting in June 2025, when the Police Chief outlined his intended use of grant funding, including public safety technology initiatives. The topic was again placed on the Public Safety Committee agenda on August 4, 2025, pending grant approval. On October 3, 2025, the Police Chief announced that the Holden Police Department had been awarded the Blue Shield Grant. Following that announcement and public discussion, the Holden City Council approved the Flock Safety Camera Agreement through Bill 10-02-25 on October 16, 2025.

The City believes it is important for residents to understand that this was not a single decision made in isolation, but rather a process that included committee discussions, grant review, public meetings, and formal City Council approval.

How These Cameras Help

Flock cameras provide law enforcement with an additional tool to help keep our community safe by:

- Helping locate stolen vehicles.
- Alerting officers when vehicles associated with AMBER Alerts, missing persons cases, or wanted suspects are detected.
- Assisting investigations involving theft, burglary, vandalism, and other crimes when vehicle information is available.
- Helping identify suspect vehicles when only limited details are known.
- Improving investigative efficiency and response times.

Because vehicles are often involved in criminal activity, vehicle identification can be an important tool in solving crimes and protecting the public.

Privacy and Accountability

At the same time, the City recognizes that residents have legitimate concerns about privacy and government use of technology. The City believes it is important to carefully balance the benefits of increased public safety with the expectation of privacy held by our residents.

The purpose of the Flock camera system is not to monitor residents' daily activities. The cameras are intended to provide investigators with objective vehicle information that may be helpful in solving crimes and protecting the public. The system does not collect biometric information and is not designed to identify individuals. Information collected by the system is retained for a limited period and may only be accessed for legitimate law enforcement and public safety purposes in accordance with applicable laws and policies.

The City also recognizes that technology continues to evolve, and public expectations regarding privacy evolve as well. While some privacy advocates have raised concerns about the potential future capabilities of large surveillance platforms, the City's contract and Flock's stated policies indicate that the deployed system is focused on vehicle identification and license plate recognition, not facial recognition of individuals.

Ongoing Review

The City will continue to monitor the use, effectiveness, costs, legal considerations, and community feedback associated with the Flock camera system. Our responsibility is to ensure that the program

provides meaningful public safety benefits while maintaining appropriate safeguards and accountability.

At this time, the City believes the cameras provide a valuable public safety benefit. However, their continued use is not unconditional. If future circumstances demonstrate that the costs, privacy concerns, maintenance requirements, or unintended consequences outweigh the public safety benefits, the City will reevaluate the program and, if appropriate, discontinue the service and remove the cameras.

Holden residents should know that we take both public safety and privacy seriously. Our goal is to use available technology responsibly, transparently, and with accountability while maintaining the trust of the community we serve.

The City of Holden remains committed to finding the proper balance between enhancing public safety and protecting the privacy rights of our residents.