

## City News

### City Statement

English

#### City statement on Flock Safety Automated License Plate Reader System

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**Mountain View, Calif.** — The Mountain View Police Department recently became aware of a brief period in 2024 during which federal agencies accessed data from the first camera in operation in Mountain View's Flock Safety automated license plate reader (ALPR) system. MVPD discovered the data access through a department-initiated audit. At the same time the audit was underway, there was news coverage of Flock Safety data from California law enforcement agencies being shared outside California, and a public records request from the *Mountain View Voice* was submitted.

During the prior federal administration, from August to November 2024, several federal law enforcement agencies accessed Mountain View's Flock Safety ALPR system for one camera via a “nationwide” search setting that was turned on by Flock Safety. **This setting was enabled without MVPD's permission or knowledge.** The federal agencies that accessed the one camera's data include Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives offices in Kentucky and Nashville, TN; Langley Air Force Base in Virginia; the U.S. GSA Office of Inspector General; Lake Mead National Recreation Area in Nevada; and an Ohio Air Force Base. Flock Safety did not retain records for that time period, which means the vendor cannot determine whether searches of Mountain View's data resulted in license plate information being shared.

Through the audit, MVPD also discovered that a “statewide” search function was not operating within the system controls we established. This function allowed Flock Safety to enable access to California law enforcement agencies that had not been approved by MVPD for 29 of the City's 30 ALPR cameras. Once the MVPD identified this issue, the setting was immediately disabled on Monday, January 5. The City's first ALPR camera went live on Aug. 14, 2024, and the final camera was installed earlier this month.

This is a system failure on Flock Safety's part. MVPD has a policy and controls in place for the ALPR pilot. MVPD worked closely with Flock Safety during the outset of the program to design a model that strictly prohibited out-of-state data sharing and ensured that any agency receiving access to Mountain View's data was approved by the Police Chief or his designee.

Since discovering unauthorized queries and potential access to Mountain View ALPR data, Police Department staff has held multiple meetings with Flock Safety leadership regarding the security and control of our data. We have been very clear about our expectations of adherence to our data policy and providing transparency to our community. We are upset and disappointed with how our data was accessed, and we are sorry that this occurred.

Flock Safety has assured us that their systems have been improved and that they no longer enable any access sharing outside of the State of California.

Despite the situation with Flock Safety, the ALPR cameras have proven to be a valuable investigative and public safety tool. The system has helped our officers investigate burglaries, home break-ins, a reported kidnapping, and has enhanced community safety.

It is unclear at this time whether the City of Mountain View's relationship with Flock Safety will continue. In the coming weeks, MVPD will bring a review of the ALPR pilot program to the City Council. Currently, staff is evaluating our relationship with Flock Safety and assessing alternative vendors that offer similar capabilities and a stronger track record of data protection, oversight, and transparency.

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