



**CITY OF SALINAS
COUNCIL STAFF REPORT**

DATE: DECEMBER 5, 2023
DEPARTMENT: SALINAS POLICE DEPARTMENT
FROM: ROBERTO FILICE, CHIEF OF POLICE
BY: TONYA ERICKSON, POLICE SERVICES ADMINISTRATOR
TITLE: LEASE OF LICENSE PLATE READER (LPR) AND PTZ CAMERAS FROM FLOCK GROUP, INC.

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

A motion to approve a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute an Agreement to include the lease of 60 Flock Safety Falcon LPR Cameras and 12 Flock Safety Condor PTZ Cameras for a term not to exceed 60-months with a total cost not to exceed \$948,000.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that City Council authorize the City Manager to execute an Agreement to include the lease of 60 Flock Safety Falcon LPR Cameras and 12 Flock Safety Condor PTZ Cameras for a term not to exceed 60-months with a total cost not to exceed \$948,000.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Salinas Police Department received an Organized Retail Theft (ORT) Grant award of \$3,573,307 from the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC), and award acceptance was approved by City Council on October 10, 2023. The grant award includes funds for LPR and PTZ camera systems from Flock Group, Inc., for a period of 36-months. Due to significant cost savings associated with a longer-term Agreement, the Department is requesting that City Council authorize the execution of a lease term not to exceed 60-months to include 60 Flock Safety Falcon LPR Cameras and 12 Flock Safety Condor PTZ Cameras for a total cost not to exceed \$948,000 of which the first 36-months will be fully funded by the BSCC Organized Retail Theft Grant.

BACKGROUND:

The California Budget Act of 2022 (Senate Bill 154) established the Organized Retail Theft (ORT) Prevention Grant Program. Grant funds are to be used by local law enforcement agencies in preventing and responding to organized retail theft, motor vehicle or motor vehicle accessory theft, or cargo theft. At the September 14, 2023, Board of State and Community Corrections Board Meeting, 31 City Police Departments and seven Sheriff's Departments were awarded a total of

\$242,250,000 in ORT Prevention Funding. The Salinas Police Department was one of the awardees, receiving an award of \$3,573,307 for the period October 1, 2023 through June 1, 2027.

The Salinas Police Department's grant submission focused on the need to respond to the growing threat of organized retail crime and continuing high rate of motor vehicle theft. The project's goal is to deter organized retail theft, identify and apprehend suspects, and recover stolen property to improve the safety of Salinas businesses, increase economic activity, improve quality of life, and enhance public safety in the City. The grant will fund the development of an Organized Retail Crime and Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Program which will be technologically supported using merchandise tracking systems, license plate reader cameras, and computer forensic tools and equipment.

The ORT Grant award includes funds for 60 License Plate Reader (LPR) and 12 Pan, Tilt and Zoom (PTZ) camera systems from Flock Group, Inc. for a period of 36-months. The Salinas Police Department has utilized LPR technology since 2018 and it has proven to be a beneficial tool for identifying and locating stolen vehicles and other vehicles linked to criminal activity. Flock's LPR cameras capture date, time, location, license plate (state, partial, paper, and no plate), vehicle details (type and color), as well as objects (bicycle, animals, and people). The system alerts police of wanted vehicles which are identified by the system. The key benefits of Flock are that they charge an annual flat rate lease per camera, which is wireless, free of infrastructure setup, and has the option for solar or direct power. They also include a two-year warranty, Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) compliant cloud-based hosting, unlimited user licenses, ongoing software enhancements, camera setup, mounting, shipping, handling, and a cellular connection. The Flock lease program prevents the City from being burdened with maintaining costly equipment at the end of the agreement, which could require replacement.

The ORT Grant requires the development of a formal Local Evaluation Plan which will include the use and benefit of the staffing and technology funded by the grant, including the LPR and PTZ cameras. This evaluation plan is in development, with a due date of April 1, 2024. In less than two years since first implementing Flock LPR cameras in the City, Salinas Police Officers have conducted 1,691 searches of the Flock system related to wanted vehicles, and Flock LPR cameras have alerted 3,456 times on wanted vehicles. The Police Department recently added a label to our Records Management System (RMS) to more easily identify cases for which LPR cameras were integral to the investigation and ultimately lead to an arrest. In reviewing the cases with an applied label, we were able to verify that LPR cameras have assisted in over 100 investigations involving missing persons, domestic violence, child abuse, human trafficking, robberies, shootings, and homicides. Below are four recent case examples:

1. In July 2022, a murder victim was found in her vehicle suffering from a gunshot wound. The vehicle was in an area with few to no surveillance cameras and there were no witnesses. Flock LPR cameras were used to determine where the victim was just before the homicide and was one of the tools that ultimately led to the identification of the suspect.
2. In December 2022, a man was shot and killed in Salinas. Flock LPR cameras were used in combination with other digital evidence to identify the suspect who was eventually charged with murder.

3. In February 2023, three armed suspects entered an apartment and conducted a home invasion robbery. Flock was the only tool available that led to identifying a suspect and arresting him for the robbery.
4. In April 2023, a victim was raped by a suspect who had slipped a date rape drug into her water. Detectives were not able to locate the suspect and the only lead was that the suspect's vehicle drove by a Flock LPR camera every day at a specific time. Detectives were able to monitor the area at the designated time to successfully stop and arrest the suspect.

The total cost for the 60-month Agreement is \$948,000 of which the first 36-months will be fully funded by the ORT Grant. In mid-November 2023, the Department was contacted by Flock Group, Inc. with an offer to enter into an extension for a separate LPR camera lease at the price of \$2,500 per camera per year, which is a savings of \$500 per year per camera when compared to current pricing. Flock further offered that with execution of that lease renewal by the end of the calendar year, they would honor the \$2,500 per camera per year price for any camera additions, including these ORT Grant-funded LPR cameras as long as the term for the new cameras was also 60-months. Assuming that separate lease extension is approved by City Council via a separate action, entering into an Agreement for 60-months will result in a cost savings of \$30,000 per year for these additional ORT-funded LPR cameras. The initial 36-month period is fully funded by the ORT Grant, and funding for the final 24-months will be requested as part of the annual budget appropriation process. Should future funding not be approved, the terms of the Flock Group, Inc. Agreement include a non-appropriation clause which states the Agreement is conditioned on the availability of funds appropriated for that purpose, thus the City has the right to terminate the Agreement with 30-days written notice without penalty or cost. For these reasons, the Department is requesting authorization for the City Manager to enter into an Agreement to include 60 Flock Safety Falcon LPR Cameras and 12 Flock Safety Condor PTZ Cameras for a term not to exceed 60-months with a total cost not to exceed \$948,000.

As Flock Safety is the sole manufacturer and developer of the Flock Safety Camera Systems, and here are no local vendors available to provide this service. The City Council has the authority to approve this direct purchase under Salinas Municipal code Section 12-27 and without application of the local purchasing preference pursuant to Salinas Municipal Code Section 12-28.080.

POLICE COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Department gave a presentation to Police Community Advisory Committee (PCAC) related to the ORT Grant on September 27, 2023. The Department further discussed the ORT Grant leases and purchases, including the Flock Safety cameras, during the Chief's Report on October 25, 2023. The Committee had an opportunity to ask questions and provide comments or concerns in response to the ORT Grant award and the technology leases and purchases.

CEQA CONSIDERATION:

Not a Project. The City of Salinas has determined that the proposed action is not a project as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (CEQA Guidelines Section 15378).

STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE:

Approving the proposed Resolution will support the City Council's Strategic Plan Goal of Public Safety.

DEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION:

The Police Department has coordinated with the Legal Department on Agreement with Flock Group, Inc., and will coordinate with the Finance Department during implementation.

FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

The BSCC Organized Retail Theft Grant is intended to fund the initial 36-months of the Agreement for the lease of the cameras identified in this staff report. The corresponding award and projected expenses will be included in future budget appropriations.

ATTACHMENTS:

Resolution – Flock Cameras for ORT Grant
Flock – ORT Expansion