The City of
SAN DIEGO
Police Department

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Smart Streetlight, License Plate Recognition Technologies Advancing Investigations
OVER 100 CAMERAS OPERATIONAL SO FAR HAVE AIDED POLICE IN KEEPING SAN DIEGO SAFE

San Diego – Following final City Council approval in November, the San Diego Police Department (SDPD) has begun installing and using Smart Streetlight cameras and Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR) technologies, and they have already assisted in solving crimes.

"Having our Smart Streetlight and ALPR technology is already making our city safer, with examples just in the first two months of operating that show their ability to help police locate and apprehend dangerous suspects more efficiently and with greater certainty," Mayor Todd Gloria said. "With the level of transparency and accountability for the use of the technologies we have in place, we're enhancing San Diegans' safety while protecting their right to privacy."

SDPD's five-year agreement with Ubicquia Inc., paired with Flock Safety's ALPR technology, included the installation and maintenance of an initial 500 locations citywide. Since late December, over 100 of the 500 cameras have been installed, with new installations occurring almost daily.

"The San Diego Police Department already produces clearance rates for solving crimes above the national average. Instead of casting a large net based on sometimes vague descriptions, the Smart Streetlight cameras and ALPR system now allow officers to be laser-focused on who committed the crime. This investment is precision, intelligence-led policing at its finest and will deliver results," Police Chief David Nisleit said.

The cameras and ALPR can only operate in conjunction with an LED streetlight. If an LED streetlight is already in place, the technology can be easily connected to the streetlight without modification. If a designated location is not LED-equipped, SDPD works collaboratively with the City's Transportation Department to replace it with an LED light. Installation of all 500 cameras is anticipated by June, weather and other infrastructure issues permitting.

"We're honored to partner with the City of San Diego and Ubicquia on this groundbreaking deployment of public safety technology," said Garrett Langley, CEO and Founder of Flock Safety. "Every city is different, but all need public safety solutions that align with the character and citizens of their community. This new method of positioning LPR and video security technology through the UbiHub streetlight technology shows that Flock Safety is committed to constant innovation to serve every community."

"We are honored to work with the San Diego Police Department. We have been impressed by the City's consultation process and SDPD's commitment to protecting and serving the citizens of San Diego amid staffing shortages. They have shown that video provides an effective investigation aid that has helped solve murders, robberies and assault cases. We are delighted to be a part of this initiative that will make San Diego safer," said Stephen Patak, Chief Revenue Officer for Ubicquia.

PRIVACY SAFEGUARDS

Once the cameras are installed, SDPD's Special Projects and Legislative Affairs Unit (SPLA) individually reviews each camera's viewpoint to digitally mask private property, so it is not recorded by the cameras before they are fully operational. The department is working to provide various training opportunities to officers and investigators to ensure they understand the responsibilities of access to the system.

Safeguards in place for the system include:

- Officers and investigators must take the required training before access is granted.
- A case or event number is listed when searching the system. The SPLA Unit is constantly auditing the system to ensure compliance.
- Video captured by the streetlight cameras is deleted after 13 days, and ALPR data is deleted after 30 days. Streetlight camera video and ALPR data are only maintained if they are being used in an investigation.
- The "hotlist" ability for officers or investigators to enter license plates suspected of or associated with a crime can only be entered by members of the SPLA Unit and only remain on the "hotlist" for 72 hours.

SDPD has taken steps to better inform the public about the new technologies, including publishing use policies and other related materials in accordance with the Transparent and Responsible Use of Surveillance Technology Ordinance to its technology website; creating a searchable map of locations of the streetlight and ALPR cameras; and collaborating with Flock Safety to create a "transparency portal" on the ALPR data being collected.

EARLY SUCCESS STORIES

Since early January, Smart Streetlight and ALPR information has assisted SDPD officers and investigators with more than 22 homicide, robbery, burglary, assault and stolen vehicle investigations. 12 stolen vehicles so far have been recovered, with 11 suspects in custody from these investigations.

Case Highlights

SDPD has accessed critical information using the Smart Streetlight and Flock ALPR system to assist with 4 homicides so far. Due to ongoing investigations, more information cannot be shared at this time.

On February 12, a suspect robbed a Navy Federal Credit Union. Despite the suspect driving a distinctive-looking vehicle, investigators did not have any leads on the vehicle. Using the Flock system, investigators were able to locate the vehicle and identify and apprehend the suspect.

On January 16, a victim was robbed at gunpoint in the Nestor neighborhood after thinking they were being pulled over by law enforcement in a vehicle equipped with red and blue lights. The suspect fled the scene, and the victim reported the crime to the San Diego Police Department. Using the Flock ALPR system, Southern Division detectives identified and located the suspect with limited information. The suspect was arrested for robbery, conspiracy and impersonating a police officer.

SDPD received information about a stolen vehicle taken from a rental car business located near the San Diego Airport. An SDPD officer entered the license plate into the Flock system and received a notification on the vehicle near the UTC Mall. The officer notified SDPD's Northern Division officers, who searched the mall's parking lots and located the stolen vehicle in a parking structure. They found the suspect in possession of the stolen vehicle's keys and a key to an additional stolen vehicle. He was arrested and booked into jail for auto theft, possession of a stolen vehicle and two misdemeanor warrants.

These are just a few examples of several ongoing investigations using the Smart Streetlight and ALPR technologies. More stories will be shared as the department continues to use the system.

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