

**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE Agenda-Amended**  
**Thursday, November 16, 2023–6:00 PM**  
**Government Center Room 204**



Virtual Link

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Nick Ledin, Chair; Tylor Elm, Vice-Chair, Mark Johnson, Mike Herrick

**1 ROLL CALL**

**2 APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

2.1 Public Safety Committee (Meeting held October 19, 2023)

**3 RECURRING BUSINESS**

3.1 Police and Fire Department Updates

**4 NEW BUSINESS**

4.1 Approve Squad Car Camera License Plate Recognition - **Amended - Added supporting documents**

**5 ADJOURNMENT**

*Notice is hereby given that a majority of the members of the Common Council may be present at the meeting, and although this may constitute a quorum of the Common Council, the Council will not take any action at this meeting.*

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*Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, if you are in need of an accommodation to participate in the public meeting process, please call (715) 395-7200 by 4:30 p.m. on the day prior to the scheduled meeting date (OR dial 711 for Telecommunications Relay Service). The City will attempt to accommodate any request depending on the amount of notice received.*

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**In compliance with Wisconsin Open Meetings Law, this agenda was posted on 11/13/2023 at the following locations:** Superior Government Center, Douglas County Courthouse, and online at <https://www.ci.superior.wi.us/agendacenter>. It was also emailed to the Superior Telegram and the Superior Public Library.

## **PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE Minutes**

### **Thursday, October 19, 2023**

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*The meeting was called to order by Councilor Ledin at 6:01 pm on October 19, 2023, in Government Center Room 204.*

Committee Members: Nick Ledin -Chair, Tylor Elm- Vice Chair, Mark Johnson, Mike Herrick

#### **1. ROLL CALL**

PRESENT: Nick Ledin-Chair, Tylor Elm-Vice Chair, Mark Johnson, Mike Herrick

VIRTUAL: Lieutenant Thor Trone

CITY STAFF PRESENT: Fire Chief Camron Vollbrecht, Nikki Kalan

OTHERS PRESENT: John Ramos

#### **2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

##### **2.1. Public Safety Committee (Meeting held September 21, 2023)**

**MOTION by Tylor Elm, second by Mike Herrick, and carried to approve the minutes from the September 21, 2023 meeting.**

#### **3. RECURRING**

##### **3.1. Police and Fire Department Updates**

Lieutenant Trone states the Police Department is taking further steps to get a therapy dog. Members from the department attended a therapy dog training session in Stevens Point on 10/18/23. The estimated time to receive a therapy dog is currently May 2024. Chief Alexander will be retiring early 2024; Police Chief position has been posted today. Chief Alexander recently attended a holocaust training that was impactful. The speaker of the holocaust training will be returning to our area in December to present the training again, this will be mandatory for the Police Department and other local agencies will be invited to attend as well. Councilor Ledin stated he was listening to WI public radio, and they mentioned the FBI and Homeland Security were putting out warnings around increased violence around Jewish, Muslim, and Arab communities. Lieutenant Trone states when intelligence briefings are received, they are put out to the department so they can be reviewed, and appropriate action can be taken when necessary.

Chief Vollbrecht gave an update on recent and upcoming trainings in the Fire Department. October is Fire Safety Month. The Fire Department has been in schools this month and home schoolers were able to visit HQ this week to learn more about fire safety. There will be an open house this Saturday, October 21 at 1PM at Headquarters. The department received their personal watercraft rescue recently.

#### **4. NEW BUSINESS**

##### **4.1. Add No Parking Sign – 2415 E. 5<sup>th</sup> St from the bus shelter to the driveway – Request from the DTA Director of Operations, Jeffrey Dahlgren**

Public Works received a request from Jeffrey Dahlgren, Director of Operations at the DTA. The Meridian Group manages the apartment building on this road and were notified of this request.

Councilor Johnson recommends notifying the Housing Authority who owns the property across the

street before the Council votes on this. Councilor Johnson also recommends putting a warning sign a couple days before a no parking sign goes up if approved.

**MOTION by Mark Johnson, second by Tylor Elm, and carried to approve. Will send to Council.**

**5. ADJOURNMENT at 6:22 by Councilor Ledin.**

*Submitted by Nikki Kalan*



# Superior Police Department

## Memorandum

TO: Public Safety Committee

FROM: Chief Nicholas Alexander

DATE: 11/13/23

SUBJECT: License Plate Recognition

*Nicholas F. Alexander*

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Members of the committee,

First, please accept my apology for not having this memo and the supporting attachments as part of the initial meeting agenda packet. I forgot to get this information to my administrative assistant.

Last year the council funded a new in-car camera system and body worn camera system for the department from AXON. As part of our purchase AXON provided a free trial of the squad car camera system's license plate recognition feature. We have been using the free trial since July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and it will expire soon.

The license plate recognition system utilizes the license plate number to query the already existing databases for stolen autos, warrants, and vehicles wanted for various reasons. These are the same systems the officer would use to call in a plate or type it in on their computer in the squad car. The system is limited to serious offenses and will alert officers if their squad passes a flagged vehicle. Minor offenses such as vehicle registration and operator driving status do not trigger any alerts.

This system increases officers' safety, public safety, as well as efficiency in solving crimes. I have attached a document demonstrating some of the successes we have experienced during the trial. In addition, you will find a data sheet from AXON on the system and SPD's policy on the use of the system.

I currently have some remaining grant fund that will expire at the end of the year, and I could utilize them to fund this feature for approximately the next two years. I am requesting your consideration and hopefully approval for this valuable tool that will help make our community and officers safer.



## ALPR overview - Fleet 3

Last Modified - November 6, 2023

The Axon Automatic License Plate Recognition (ALPR) system encompasses two complementary components—one in-vehicle and another in-office—to provide a high-quality, real-time, in-vehicle alerting on plates of interest. Plate read data collected during patrol is retained and can be queried through Axon Evidence in later investigations.

The in-vehicle component is incorporated into Axon Fleet 3 and provides notifications on Axon Fleet Dashboard when it reads a plate that matches in an agency hotlist.

The in-office component included in Axon Evidence allows ALPR record searching and system management.

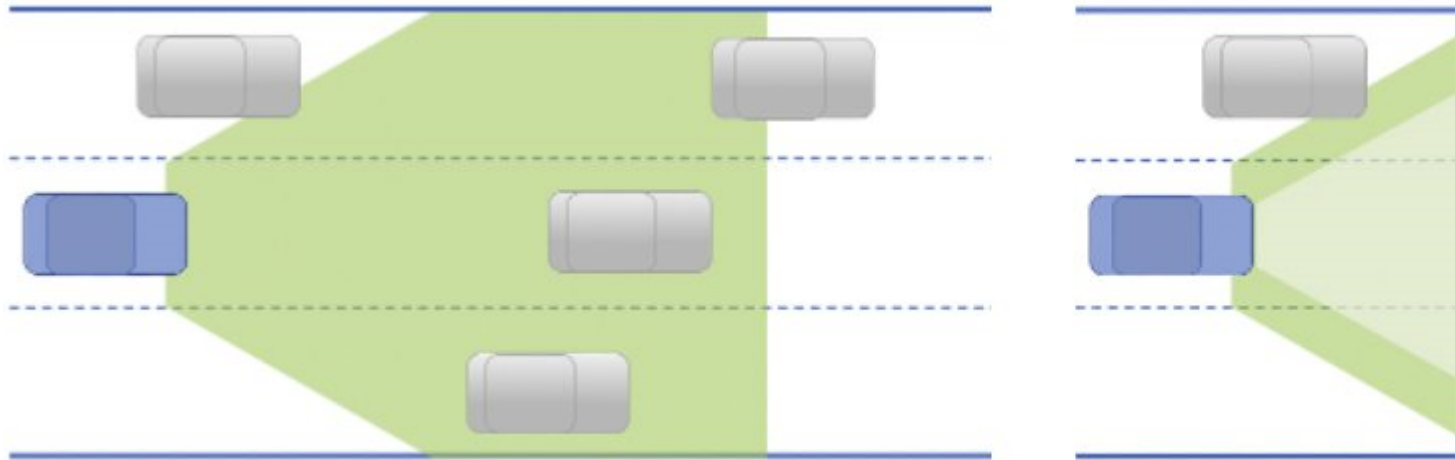
### Guidance on ALPR use

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Axon Fleet 3 ALPR is a three-lane, mobile ALPR system with a 60° field of view, covering three lanes of traffic out to a distance of 50 feet—referred to as the capture area (image, left)—and will read plates passing at closing speeds of up to 140 mph.

Plate capture is highly dependent on sufficient illumination. In low light/night conditions, the capture area is limited to the headlight illuminated area within the three lanes in front of the

vehicle (image, right). Generally, if you can't read the plate with your eyes, it won't be captured.



Typically, with the camera pointed straight forward, the capture area is the center lane and both adjacent lanes. The camera also has predefined pan detents every  $22.5^\circ$  to capture left or right. In all but some specific cases described below, keep the camera facing straight forward for best ALPR results.

## Temperature

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The Fleet 3 camera will disable ALPR if the camera internal temperature exceeds  $185^\circ\text{F}$  ( $85^\circ\text{C}$ ). If starting a shift with a hot vehicle, running the air conditioner will help ALPR cool down to operating temperature in 10–15 minutes. The ALPR camera view will indicate ALPR OFF if the ALPR service is not available.

## Capture rate and read accuracy

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**Capture rate** is the percentage of plates read. **Read accuracy** is the percentage of reads that are accurate.

ALPR performance, much like driving visibility, is negatively affected by heavy precipitation or fog, especially when accumulated on the windshield. The camera must be able to see a plate clearly to read it. Generally, if you can't read the plate with your eyes, ALPR can't either.

An advantage of Axon ALPR over traditional systems is the benefit of the vehicle windshield wipers to clear precipitation from the camera's view. Externally-mounted systems usually have no mechanism to clear the camera's view. While use of windshield wipers will mitigate the effects of precipitation, it will not completely eliminate it.

Windshield cleanliness and proper wiper maintenance/upkeep are also important factors in ensuring good ALPR performance; smudges or streaks due to worn wipers or dirty windshields will make plates appear blurry to the camera.

Fog will also degrade performance proportionally to its density.

## **Alert latency**

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ALPR will alert on a hotlist match within one second of the plate passing through the capture area.

## **Comparison to legacy ALPR systems**

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Legacy ALPR systems rely on camera technology that was initially developed for fixed ALPR applications. The typical ALPR camera focuses on one lane of travel, with a very narrow field of view and very specific focal length, yielding a capture area that is approximately 4x4x6 feet. Plates must pass through this small capture area to be read.

In fixed applications, this works quite well, but when mounted to a mobile application, the capture area is not static, so many plates simply do not pass through the read area and are never read. To counter this, these systems may employ multiple cameras.

Conversely, Axon Fleet 3 ALPR uses a wide 60° field of view covering three lanes out to 50 feet away. While a legacy ALPR system with two forward facing cameras has a detection area of approximately 192 cu. feet, Axon ALPR's detection area is nearly 90 times greater.

**Next topic: [Use cases](#)**

## Automated License Plate Readers (ALPR)

### 427.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) technology, also known as License Plate Recognition, provides automated detection of license plates. ALPRs are used by the Superior Police Department to convert data associated with vehicle license plates for official law enforcement purposes, including identifying stolen or wanted vehicles, stolen license plates and missing persons. ALPRs may also be used to gather information related to active warrants, homeland security, suspect interdiction and stolen property recovery.

### 427.2 DEFINITIONS

- (a) **Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR):** A device that uses cameras and computer technology to compare digital images to lists of known information of interest.
- (b) **ALPR Operator:** Trained Department members who may utilize ALPR system/equipment. ALPR operators may be assigned to any position within the Department, and the ALPR Administrator may order the deployment of the ALPR systems for use in various efforts.
- (c) **ALPR Administrator:** The Investigations Division Captain or the Chief's designee, serves as the ALPR Administrator for the Department.
- (d) **Hot List:** A list of license plates associated with vehicles of interest compiled from one or more databases including, but not limited to, NCIC, WI DOT, Local BOLO's, etc.
- (e) **Vehicles of Interest:** Including, but not limited to vehicles which are reported as stolen; display stolen license plates or tags; vehicles linked to missing and/or wanted persons and vehicles flagged by the Department of Transportation or law enforcement agencies.
- (f) **Detection:** Data obtained by an ALPR of an image (such as a license plate) within public view that was read by the device, including potential images (such as the plate and description of vehicle on which it was displayed), and information regarding the location of the ALPR system at the time of the ALPR's read.
- (g) **Hit:** Alert from the ALPR system that a scanned license plate number may be in the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) or other law enforcement database for a specific reason including, but not limited to, being related to a stolen car, wanted person, missing person, domestic violation protective order or terrorist-related activity.

### 427.3 ADMINISTRATION OF ALPR DATA

All installation and maintenance of ALPR equipment, as well as ALPR data retention and access, shall be managed by the Investigation Captain. The Investigation Captain will assign personnel under his/her command to administer the day-to-day operation of the ALPR equipment and data. The ALPR technology, also known as License Plate Recognition (LPR), allows for the automated detection of license plates through the Superior Police Department's ALPR's system



# Superior Police Department

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### *Automated License Plate Readers (ALPR)*

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and the vendor's license plate detection technology. The technology is used by the Superior Police Department to convert data associated with vehicle license plates and vehicle descriptions for official law enforcement purposes, including identifying stolen or wanted vehicles, stolen license plates and missing persons. It may also be used to gather information related to active warrants, homeland security, suspect interdiction and stolen property recovery.

#### **427.4 PERMITTED/IMPERMISSIBLE USES**

The ALPR system, and all data collected, is the property of the Superior Police Department. Department personnel may only access and use the ALPR system for official and legitimate law enforcement purposes consistent with this Policy. The following uses of the ALPR system are specifically prohibited:

- (a) **Invasion of Privacy:** Except when done pursuant to a court order such as a search warrant, is a violation of this Policy to utilize the ALPR to record license plates except those of vehicles that are exposed to public view (e.g., vehicles on a public road or street, or that are on private property but whose license plate(s) are visible from a public road, street, or a place to which members of the public have access, such as the parking lot of a shop or other business establishment)
- (b) **Harassment or Intimidation:** It is a violation of this Policy to use the ALPR system to harass and/or intimidate any individual or group.
- (c) **Use Based on a Protected Characteristic.** It is a violation of this policy to use the ALPR system or associated scan files or hot lists solely because of a person's, or group's race, gender, religion, political affiliation, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, or other classification protected by law.
- (d) **Personal Use:** It is a violation of this Policy to use the ALPR system or associated scan files or hot lists for any personal purpose.
- (e) **Constitutional Rights.** It is a violation of this policy to use the ALPR system or associated scan files or hot lists for the purpose or known effect of infringing upon Constitutionally protected rights.

#### **427.5 ALPR OPERATION**

Use of an ALPR is restricted to the purposes outlined below. Department personnel shall not use, or allow others to use, the equipment or database records for any unauthorized purpose.

- (a) An ALPR shall only be used for official and legitimate law enforcement business.
- (b) An ALPR may be used in conjunction with any patrol operation or official department investigation. Reasonable suspicion or probable cause is not necessary before using an ALPR.
- (c) While an ALPR may be used to canvass license plates around any crime scene, particular consideration should be given to using ALPR-equipped cars to canvass areas around homicides, shootings and other major incidents. Partial license plates reported during major crimes should be entered into the ALPR system in an attempt to identify suspect vehicles.

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### *Automated License Plate Readers (ALPR)*

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- (d) No member of this department shall operate ALPR equipment or access ALPR data without first completing department-approved training.
- (e) If practicable, the officer should verify an ALPR response through the Transaction Information for the Management of Enforcement (TIME) system or National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (NLETS) before taking enforcement action that is based solely upon an ALPR alert.
- (f) Hot Lists. Designation of hot lists to be utilized by the ALPR system shall be made by the ALPR Administrator or his/her designee. Hot lists shall be obtained or compiled from sources as may be consistent with the purposes of the ALPR system set forth in this Policy. Occasionally, there may be errors in the ALPR system's read of a license plate. Therefore, an alert alone shall not be a basis for police action (other than following the vehicle of interest). Prior to initiation of a stop of a vehicle or other intervention based on an alert, Department members shall undertake the following:
  - 1. **Verification of status on a Hot List.** An officer must receive confirmation, from a Communications Dispatcher or other department computer device, that the license plate is still stolen, wanted, or otherwise of interest before proceeding (absent exigent circumstances).
  - 2. **Visual verification of license plate number.** Officers shall visually verify that the license plate of interest matches identically with the image of the license plate number captured (read) by the LPR, including both the alphanumeric characters of the license plate, state of issue, and vehicle descriptors before proceeding. Department members alerted to the fact that an observed motor vehicle's license plate is entered as a Hot Plate (hit) in a specific BOLO (be on the lookout) list are required to make a reasonable effort to confirm that a wanted person is actually in the vehicle and/or that a reasonable basis exists before a Department member would have a lawful basis to stop the vehicle.
  - 3. Department members will clear all stops from hot list alerts by indicating the positive ALPR Hit, i.e., with an arrest or other enforcement action. If it is not obvious in the text of the call as to the correlation of the ALPR Hit and the arrest, then the Department member shall update with the Communications Dispatcher and original person and/or a crime analyst inputting the vehicle in the hot list (hit).
  - 4. General Hot Lists will be automatically downloaded into the ALPR system a minimum of once a day with the most current data overwriting the old data.
  - 5. All entries and updates of specific Hot Lists within the ALPR system will be documented by the requesting Department member within the appropriate general offense report. As such, specific Hot Lists shall be approved by the ALPR Administrator (or his/her designee) before initial entry within the ALPR system. The updating of such a list within the ALPR system shall thereafter be accomplished pursuant to the approval of the Department member's immediate supervisor. The hits from these data sources should be viewed as informational; created solely to bring the officers attention to specific vehicles that have been associated with criminal activity. All Hot Plates and suspect information entered into the ALPR system will contain the following information as a minimum:
    - i Entering Department member's name

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## Policy Manual

### *Automated License Plate Readers (ALPR)*

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- ii Related case number.
- 6. iii Short synopsis describing the nature of the originating call
- (g) No ALPR operator may access TIME or NLETS data unless otherwise authorized to do so.

#### **427.6 ALPR DATA COLLECTION AND RETENTION**

All data and images gathered by an ALPR are for the official use of the Superior Police Department and because such data may contain confidential TIME information, it is not open to public review. ALPR information gathered and retained by this department may be used and shared with prosecutors or others only as permitted by law.

The Administration Division Commander is responsible to ensure proper collection and retention of ALPR data and for transferring ALPR data stored in department vehicles to the department server on a regular basis, not to exceed 30 days between transfers.

All ALPR data downloaded to the server should be stored for the period established in the department records retention policy and thereafter may be purged unless it has become, or it is reasonable to believe it will become, evidence in a criminal or civil action or is subject to a lawful action to produce records. In those circumstances the applicable data should be downloaded from the server onto portable media and booked into evidence.

#### **427.7 ACCOUNTABILITY AND SAFEGUARDS**

All saved data will be closely safeguarded and protected by both procedural and technological means. The Superior Police Department will observe the following safeguards regarding access to and use of stored data:

- (a) All non-law enforcement requests for access to stored ALPR data shall be referred to the Senior Records Clerk and processed in accordance with applicable law.
- (b) All ALPR data downloaded to the mobile workstation and server shall be accessible only through a login/password-protected system capable of documenting all access of information by name, date and time.
- (c) Persons approved to access ALPR data under these guidelines are permitted to access the data for legitimate law enforcement purposes only, such as when the data relate to a specific criminal investigation or department-related civil or administrative action.
- (d) Such ALPR data may be released to other authorized and verified law enforcement officials and agencies at any time for legitimate law enforcement purposes.
- (e) All ALPR system audits should be conducted on a regular basis.

## ALPR Trial Period Successes

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On 10/13/23 Officer Gaard was driving in the 1800 block of Ogden Avenue in Superior when her ALPR hit on a vehicle stolen from Two Harbors, MN. After speaking to the registered owner, it was ultimately towed by one of our local companies (NASCAR Towing). During the inventory, Officer Gaard discovered numerous items of indicia of occupancy, specifically several pieces of mail from St. Louis County HHS address to (deleted name). There were also several items of female clothing.

As luck would have it, Officer Mahlen with SPD was driving on London Rd. in Duluth on 10/12/2023 and his ALPR actually captured the vehicle turning onto London Rd. from 26th Ave. E. The image his ALPR captured appears to show a blonde female driver in the stolen black Ford.

Sgt. Lear tracked down the image from Mahlen's dash cam and also found the vehicle numerous other times on ALRP in our city prior to it being listed as stolen.

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On 10/21/23, Officer K Davis was transporting a patient to St. Luke's hospital in Duluth when her fleet camera notified her of a ALPR hit on a reported stolen vehicle. Officer Davis notified DPD. The vehicle was recovered, and the suspect was apprehended.

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10/09/2023 - There was an armed robbery of a bank in Eau Claire, Bayfield County's Flock camera system detected the suspect vehicle in our area the day after the robbery and was able to alert area agencies. We immediately entered the vehicle information into our hotlist. The suspect was apprehended later that day at the Itasca Holiday in Superior. In that case, our ALPR didn't get an opportunity to locate the vehicle, but the wider system alerted law enforcement that the suspect was in our area, and he was quickly apprehended by the WI State Patrol. In this case WSP simply happened to run into the vehicle while the driver was inside the store. Had WSP not coincidentally stopped at the Holiday, it is likely our ALPR system would've spotted the vehicle.

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On 08/17/23, Officer Matt Swanson's fleet camera notified him of a stolen vehicle in the area of Belknap Street and Hill Avenue. Officers initiated a high-risk vehicle stop. The stolen vehicle was recovered undamaged, and the suspect was taken into custody.

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On 08/03/23, a Superior business was burglarized. Surveillance video captured a license plate number on the vehicle associated with the burglary suspect. ALPR located the suspect vehicle the following day, and it was recovered for evidentiary purposes. The suspect was arrested on August 10<sup>th</sup>.

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On 08/12/23, Officer Gaard's fleet camera notified her of an ALPR hit on a reportedly stolen vehicle on the 1500 block of Belknap Street. In this case, the vehicle was reported stolen in Minnesota and later recovered in Minnesota. The recovering agency failed to remove the vehicle from the NCIC database. Our officers were able to locate the vehicle with the help of ALPR, clear up the matter, and remove the vehicle from the NCIC database.

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Investigators and detectives report they regularly use ALPR technology to enhance their investigative efforts by being able to quickly locate vehicles associated with criminal investigations. Currently, there are 14 vehicles entered into the local ALPR hotlist. These vehicles are associated with criminal investigations where officers are actively attempting to locate a suspect. Recently, officers were able to use ALPR records to investigate a suspicious death and identify key information to resolve the case.

Vehicles entered in the local hotlist include vehicles associated with missing persons, suspects wanted for serious crimes, and safety alerts for officers.