

Date: February 25, 2021

To: Mayor Julie Moore Wolfe
Decatur City Council Members

From: City Manager Scot Wrighton
Chief James E. Getz Jr.
Jim Edwards, IT Director

Subject: Lease Agreement for Flock Safety LPR

BRIEFING MEMO

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

It is recommended that the City Council approve a Lease Agreement with Flock Safety to lease 60 License Plate Reader (LPR) Cameras for deployment in neighborhoods, and adjacent to major thoroughfares. The recommended lease is for 3 years with a first-year startup cost of \$165,000. The cost would be \$150,000 each year for the following two years. As proposed, the entire first-year expenditure would require no use of General Fund monies in 2021.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Decatur Police Department continues to recognize the need for, and value of, street surveillance cameras to help solve and reduce crime. Street surveillance camera systems, when strategically placed, can assist the Decatur Police Department solve cases.

In November of 2020, during council study sessions concerning the police budget, several council members inquired about the purchase and deployment of street cameras to help investigate cases and reduce crime. At that time, the budget only supported surveillance camera deployment expenditures in the Johns Hill Neighborhood as part of the overall Johns Hill project. City staff was also desirous of conducting more analysis into camera surveillance strategies and methods in a limited area before any large-scale deployment throughout the city. Since then, IT and police staff have continued to analyze the best surveillance camera solutions for Decatur and best practices for their deployment and use. Additionally, there is a greater than anticipated surplus in the city's DUI account that can be used to fund a larger deployment of cameras (about one-third of the cameras will be funded by the Buffett Foundation's Johns Hill Revitalization grant as originally proposed; and the other two-thirds would be installed in other locations and funded with DUI funds).

Proposed locations, both inside and outside the Johns Hill neighborhood, have been tentatively selected based on most recent heat maps produced by the Decatur Police Department Crime Analysis Unit, that identifies high shooting, violent crime and homicide prone areas. Flock

personnel have also provided input on preferred locations for camera deployment, and they will also do on-sight analyses before the LPR's are put in place (if approved by the council).

The Chief of Police, the IT Director and other staff have met several times with Flock Safety via webinars. The Chief of Police and IT Director believe the leasing of the LPR Cameras is the best and most efficient option for the City's Neighborhood Camera Project. The lease opportunity allows this project to be a turnkey operation with a pilot program beginning in early summer. This would allow the City to take advantage of a 60-day pilot program with at least the 40 non-Johns Hill cameras in place during the high crime period of the summer. The Johns Hill project's cameras will be installed in coordination with other infrastructure improvements being made this summer in the Johns Hill neighborhood. Staff has not yet determined if it will be possible to install all of the cameras at about the same time.

As part of the staff research, the Chief of Police has spoken to several police departments that have this same system in place. All have been very complimentary of the system. One Illinois police department had 10 cameras installed in June of 2020. The cameras were integral in solving 2 homicides and 1 armed robbery in the first six months. This local police department is currently adding 15 more cameras.

Approval of the proposed lease will require amendment of the budget at a later date.