

**COUNCIL ACTION FORM**

**SUBJECT:**                   **SECURITY CAMERAS IN CAMPUSTOWN**

**BACKGROUND:**

Security cameras for the Campustown area were originally discussed by the City Council in July 2011. At that time, the City Council directed staff to report on the feasibility of security cameras in this area. The Police Department staff met with the Student Affairs Commission and various stakeholder groups to gather input on this concept. There was general support for the crime prevention benefits, noting that security cameras are quite common in local business and on the university campus. However, stakeholders suggested there be limitations on the storage of images and that utilization generally be limited to the investigation of crimes.

The Police Department conducted a camera trial with a local vendor and reported back to the City Council in June 2012. The Council accepted the staff report, but at that time deferred any action on a camera system for the Campustown area.

**On May 27, 2014, the City Council again requested a camera report. This report was to study available technologies, bring back a specific camera proposal, and include data on the deterrent effect of camera systems.**

**IMPACT OF SECURITY CAMERAS:**

**As noted in the original report to the City Council, the cameras may have some modest crime deterrent effect, but the primary benefit is expected to be as an aid in solving crimes.** With respect to the deterrent effect, there are a number of evaluation reviews that have been published. Phillips (1999) found that cameras were generally effective against property crimes, but the impact was less clear when looking at personal crime or public order offenses. Similarly, Welsh and Farrington (2002, 2004) reviewed 13 studies finding five that showed a crime reduction, three that did not, while another five had inconclusive results. Some of the reasons for lack of effect included low base rates of crime and the fact the cameras documented crime that may otherwise have been missed or not reported.

The US Department of Justice (DOJ) drew the following conclusions in their Problem-Oriented Policing Guide (2006):

- Camera systems are more effective at combatting property crime than violent crime or public order offenses.
- Camera systems appear to work best in small, well-defined areas.
- The individual context of each area and the way the system is used appear to be important.

- Achieving statistically significant reductions in crime can be difficult for a variety of reasons.
- A close relationship with the police appears important in determining a successful program.

In concluding their analysis, DOJ states: To move beyond a strictly statistical interpretation, it is possible to say there was some evidence of crime reduction in most of the systems reported (in the appendices to their report).

### **STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK:**

The FY 2011-2012 camera trial demonstrated the feasibility of camera deployment in the Campustown area. The Campustown Action Association and ISU Student Government were contacted and invited to comment on the concept. After surveying their members and having various discussions, study, and deliberation, the Campustown Action Association endorsed the concept in a letter sent June 6, 2016. Iowa State University Student Government had passed a resolution in FY 2011-2012 in support of security cameras. This position was reiterated in a unanimous January 27, 2016 resolution and an August 23, 2017 resolution in support of security cameras.

### **VARIOUS OPTIONS WERE EXPLORED:**

Several approaches for the deployment of a camera system were explored. These included:

- Utilize existing private camera security systems on buildings to provide coverage of public areas in Campustown.
- Utilize the City's traffic management cameras in the Campustown area to provide coverage of public areas in Campustown.
- Create a new unique security camera system that is owned and operated by the City to provide coverage of public areas in Campustown.
- Create a partnership with Iowa State University to utilize their security camera system to provide coverage of public areas in Campustown.

### **COST OF A PROPOSAL:**

Student leaders, ISU staff, and the Ames Police Department met and discussed potential camera locations and costs. **Based on those conversations, a basic proposal was developed for cameras in five locations operating on the ISU Security Camera System. These locations would provide coverage of Chamberlain Avenue from the Intermodal facility to Stanton Avenue and Welch Avenue from Lincoln Way into the area south of the Clocktower. This proposal includes the cost of a camera near the middle of the 100 block of Welch Avenue.**

**It is possible that this area will be adequately covered by cameras at the Clocktower and Lincoln Way. Should that be the case, the midblock camera would not be installed.**

The camera system that is being proposed will be managed by ISU Facilities Planning and Management as part of their campus-wide services. The projected costs for six cameras in the five locations that would be added to the ISU system are as follows:

	On-Time Cost	On-Going Annual Costs	Comments
Cameral Installation	\$49,875		
IP Charges		\$720	Monthly Jack Fee (6X\$10X12)
Monthly Management Fee		\$2,160	Monthly Per Camera Fee (\$30X6X12)
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>\$49,875</b>	<b>\$2,880</b>	

**CONCERNS WITH CAMERAS:**

The American Civil Liberties Union has noted three general areas of concern with security cameras:

1. Cameras have the potential to change the core experience of going out in public in America because of its chilling effect on citizens.
2. This surveillance carries very real dangers of abuse and "mission creep."
3. Would not significantly protect us against terrorism.  
Given that, its benefits - preventing at most a few street crimes, and probably none - are disproportionately small.  
(<https://www.aclu.org/other/whats-wrong-public-video-surveillance>)

**The staff believes that the proposal offered above acknowledges these concerns, in part, by having this information stored and managed by non-police entities at Iowa State University. Access to this information would be granted to Ames Police as necessary to investigate or prevent crimes in the Campustown area. There is no intention for routine monitoring of this system by City of Ames staff. While the public may have concerns about excessive surveillance, both the ISU Student Government and the Campustown Action Association have noted their support of this concept.**

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Approve the proposal for the installation and operation of security cameras in Campustown and the ongoing expense of maintaining these cameras on the Iowa State University Security Camera System. Funding for this system will be included

in the budget development process for consideration by the City Council in the FY 2018-19 budget year.

Given the uncertainty of the State Legislators' intent to continue to "backfill" the General Fund, it would seem advisable to delay any action to implement this proposal until March when more information is available regarding the status of the General Fund for FY 2017/18 and FY 2018/19.

2. Approve the proposal for the installation and operation of security cameras in Campustown and the ongoing expense of maintaining these cameras on the Iowa State University Security Camera System, but direct the staff to move ahead to implement the unbudgeted proposal immediately with funding coming from the available balance in the General Fund.
3. Approve only those camera locations in the intersection of Welch and Chamberlain and proceed with developing a budget for the installation and operation of these camera on the Iowa State University Security Camera System. Funding for this system should be included in the budget development process for 2018-2019.
4. Do not approve the installation and operation of security cameras in Campustown.

**MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Iowa State University Student Government representatives have consistently supported security cameras in Campustown. The Campustown Action Association sought input from the community and their board subsequently voted to endorse the placement of security cameras in Campustown. Placing cameras on the University Security Camera System is a more cost effective solution than creating a new system for this purpose. In addition, having a system that is not under the control of law enforcement is responsive to some of the citizen concerns that were raised in previous discussions about security cameras.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, thereby approving the proposal for the installation and operation of security cameras in Campustown and the ongoing expense of maintaining these cameras on the Iowa State University Security Camera System. Funding for this system will be included in the budget development process for consideration by the City Council in the FY2018-19 budget year.