

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: **SECURITY CAMERAS IN CAMPUSTOWN**

BACKGROUND:

In 2017, the City Council directed staff to proceed with a concept for the installation of security cameras in Campustown. This decision was reached following a series of staff reports provided to the Council dating back to 2011 regarding camera technologies, operations, and policies. The concept of implementing cameras in Campustown was discussed with and had the approval of the ISU Student Government and Campustown Action Association (CAA).

Following the City Council's direction to proceed with this concept, City staff obtained cost and technical information about camera placement and operations. Although the proposal in 2017 indicated the possibility of connecting the cameras using a secure wireless mesh network, City staff has obtained cost information using fiber connections, which will increase video quality and be more secure compared to wireless connections. Staff took advantage of the Welch Avenue Reconstruction project to install conduit for fiber optic cabling at a minimal cost.

Proposals for the placement of four cameras are \$15,751 for the installation of fiber cabling and \$21,535 for the installation of cameras and storage equipment, for a total project cost of \$37,286. Funding in the amount of \$49,000 is available from a prior budget year allocation that has been carried forward for this project.

NEW ISSUES TO CONSIDER:

During previous discussions regarding cameras with the City Council, a key issue was the manner in which the cameras would be operated. In particular, concerns were raised by community members about the possibility of the cameras being operated and monitored in real-time by Ames Police Department officials. To address this concern, City staff in 2017 proposed having the cameras owned by the City but having recordings managed and stored by non-police entities at Iowa State University. Access to the recordings would be granted as needed to investigate or prevent crimes in the Campustown area, but Ames Police would not have routine access to live video feeds.

City staff has now learned that ISU will charge the City ongoing fees in exchange for managing the camera system. **These fees will total approximately \$2,880 per year.** Additionally, an agreement would need to be negotiated with ISU regarding the access and retrieval of stored recordings. By housing the recordings at ISU, Ames Police would not have immediate access to camera footage as an emergency situation develops.

In the time since cameras were last discussed with the City Council, the Police Department has experienced several Campustown incidents in which on-demand access to camera footage would have assisted in an investigation or in crime prevention efforts. These have included several large fights and a number of assaults that were difficult to reconstruct based on witness statements alone. Additionally, there has been an uptick in large gatherings with the emergence of “801 Day.” There was also a drive-by shooting in 2017 on this corridor of Welch Avenue in which immediate camera access may have assisted in the investigation.

Given 1) the ongoing fees proposed if the camera system is housed at ISU, and 2) the numerous incidents in this area in which instantaneous access to camera footage could assist in an investigation, City staff is now proposing that the camera recordings be housed and managed by the City.

City staff has consulted with Campustown Action Association and the ISU Student Government regarding the revised concept of the City managing the camera system as opposed to the earlier concept of a university-operated system. **Representatives of both organizations have indicated their continuing support of the camera proposal.**

It should be noted that the Police Department has neither the need nor sufficient staffing to actively monitor these cameras on a constant basis. Except when large gatherings or an active public safety hazard is taking place, staff proposes that the camera footage would only be reviewed to investigate a report of an incident after-the-fact. City staff has drafted a proposed policy to address circumstances in which these cameras would be accessed (attached).

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Direct staff to proceed with the installation of the Campustown security camera system and house the recordings on the City’s network. Access to the cameras would be based upon the attached policy.
2. Direct staff to proceed with the installation of the Campustown security camera system and house the recordings on the ISU network. Staff would develop an agreement with ISU regarding how the recordings would be accessed.
3. Do not authorize staff to proceed with the camera project.

CITY MANAGER’S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The installation of cameras in the Campustown area has been a discussion of the City Council for the past nine years. Although the original intent was to house the recordings on servers owned by the City and operated by Iowa State University, it is evident now that this approach would increase ongoing operational costs and lead to delays in

investigating time-sensitive incidents. City staff has developed a policy outlining the circumstances in which camera recordings would be accessed.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1 as described above.

Public Safety Video Surveillance System

336.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidance for the placement and monitoring of department public safety video surveillance, as well as the storage and release of the captured images.

This policy only applies to overt, marked public safety video surveillance systems operated by the Department. It does not apply to mobile audio/video systems, covert audio/video systems or any other image-capturing devices used by the Department.

336.2 POLICY

The Ames Police Department operates a public safety video surveillance system to complement its anti-crime strategy, to effectively allocate and deploy personnel, and to enhance public safety and security in public areas. Cameras may be placed in strategic locations throughout the City to detect and deter crime, to help safeguard against potential threats to the public, to help manage emergency response situations during natural and man-made disasters and to assist City officials in providing services to the community.

Video surveillance in public areas will be conducted in a legal and ethical manner while recognizing and protecting constitutional standards of privacy.

336.3 OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

Only department-approved video surveillance equipment shall be utilized. Members authorized to monitor video surveillance equipment should only monitor public areas and public activities where no reasonable expectation of privacy exists. The Chief of Police or the authorized designee shall approve all proposed locations for the use of video surveillance technology and should consult with and be guided by legal counsel as necessary in making such determinations. The emphasis shall be on active investigations primarily used for after-the-fact review. Monitoring may be used in certain investigations when an immediate response is desired.

336.3.1 PLACEMENT AND MONITORING

Camera placement will be guided by the underlying purpose or strategy associated with the overall video surveillance plan. As appropriate, the Chief of Police should confer with other affected City divisions and designated community groups when evaluating camera placement. Environmental factors, including lighting, location of buildings, presence of vegetation or other obstructions, should also be evaluated when determining placement.

Cameras shall only record video images and not sound. Recorded images may be used for a variety of purposes, including criminal investigations and monitoring of activity around high-value or high-threat areas. The public safety video surveillance system may be useful for the following purposes:

- (a) To prevent, deter and identify criminal activity.
- (b) To target identified areas of gang and narcotics complaints or activity.

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- (c) To respond to critical incidents.
- (d) To assist in identifying, apprehending and prosecuting offenders.
- (e) To document officer and offender conduct during interactions to safeguard the rights of the public and officers.
- (f) To augment resources in a cost-effective manner.
- (g) To monitor pedestrian and vehicle traffic activity.

Images from each camera should be recorded in a manner consistent with the underlying purpose of the particular camera.

The Chief of Police may authorize video feeds from the public safety video surveillance system to be forwarded to a specified location for monitoring by other than police personnel, such as allied government agencies, road or traffic crews, or fire or emergency operations personnel.

Unauthorized recording, viewing, reproduction, dissemination or retention of anything documented by public safety surveillance equipment is prohibited.

336.3.2 CAMERA MARKINGS

All public areas monitored by permanently installed public safety surveillance equipment shall be marked in a conspicuous manner with appropriate signs to inform the public that the area is under police surveillance. Signs should be placed appropriately and without obstruction to ensure visibility.

336.3.3 INTEGRATION WITH OTHER TECHNOLOGY

The Department may elect to integrate its public safety video surveillance system with other technology to enhance available information. Systems such as gunshot detection, incident mapping, crime analysis, and other video-based analytical systems may be considered based upon availability and the nature of department strategy.

The Department should evaluate the availability and propriety of networking or otherwise collaborating with appropriate private sector entities and should evaluate whether the use of certain camera systems, such as pan-tilt-zoom systems, video enhancement or other analytical technology, requires additional safeguards.

336.4 VIDEO SUPERVISION

Supervisors should monitor video surveillance access and usage to ensure members follow department policy and applicable laws.

336.4.1 PROHIBITED ACTIVITY

Public safety video surveillance systems will not intentionally be used to invade the privacy of individuals or observe areas where a reasonable expectation of privacy exists.

Public safety video surveillance equipment shall not be used in an unequal or discriminatory manner and shall not target individuals or groups based solely on actual or perceived characteristics such as race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, economic status, age, cultural group, or disability.

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Video surveillance equipment shall not be used to harass, intimidate, or discriminate against any individual or group.

336.5 STORAGE AND RETENTION OF MEDIA

All downloaded media shall be stored in a secure area with access restricted to authorized persons. A recording needed as evidence shall be copied to a suitable medium and booked into evidence in accordance with established evidence procedures. All actions taken with respect to retention of media shall be appropriately documented.

The type of video surveillance technology employed and the manner in which recordings are used and stored will affect retention periods. The recordings should be stored and retained in accordance with the established records retention schedule.

336.5.1 EVIDENTIARY INTEGRITY

All downloaded and retained media shall be treated in the same manner as other evidence. Media shall be accessed, maintained, stored and retrieved in a manner that ensures its integrity as evidence, including strict adherence to chain of custody requirements. Electronic trails, including encryption, digital masking of innocent or uninvolved individuals to preserve anonymity, authenticity certificates and date and time stamping shall be used as appropriate to preserve individual rights and to ensure the authenticity and maintenance of a secure evidentiary chain of custody.

336.6 RELEASE OF VIDEO IMAGES

All recorded video images gathered by the public safety video surveillance equipment are for the official use of the Ames Police Department.

Requests for recorded video images from the public or the media shall be processed in the same manner as requests for department public records.

Requests for recorded images from other law enforcement agencies shall be referred to the Investigations Commander for release in accordance with a specific and legitimate law enforcement purpose.

Recorded video images that are the subject of a court order or subpoena shall be processed in accordance with the established department subpoena process.

336.7 VIDEO SURVEILLANCE AUDIT

The Chief of Police or the authorized designee will conduct an annual review of the public safety video surveillance system. The review should include an analysis of the cost, benefit and effectiveness of the system, including any public safety issues that were effectively addressed or any significant prosecutions that resulted, and any systemic operational or administrative issues that were identified, including those related to training, discipline or policy.

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The results of each review shall be appropriately documented and maintained by the Chief of Police or the authorized designee and other applicable advisory bodies. Any recommendations for training or policy should be promptly addressed.

336.8 TRAINING

All department members authorized to operate or access public safety video surveillance systems shall receive appropriate training. Training should include guidance on the use of cameras, interaction with dispatch and patrol operations and a review regarding relevant policies and procedures, including this policy. Training should also address state and federal law related to the use of video surveillance equipment and privacy.