

MEMORANDUM



POLICE DEPARTMENT

DATE: June 2, 2026

TO: Justin Hess, City Manager

FROM: Rafael Quintero, Chief of Police
VIA: Adam Cornils, Deputy Chief
BY: Mark Stohl, Police Captain
Viviana Garzon, Police Administrator

SUBJECT: Information on the Burbank Police Department Budget Line Item:
Equipment Rental/ Automated License Plate Reader

BACKGROUND

At the May 19, 2026, City Council (Council) meeting, Council Member Anthony requested information regarding the Burbank Police Department's (Department) Fiscal Year (FY) 2026-27 appropriation request from Drug Asset Forfeiture Fund 124 in the amount of \$170,000 for Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) cameras.

DISCUSSION

As part of the FY 2026-27 budget planning process, the Department identified Drug Asset Forfeiture Fund 124 (Fund 124) as the funding source for its contract with Flock Safety (Flock). The contract includes the equipment rental, software, maintenance, repair, and warranty of fifty-seven (57) ALPR cameras at an annual cost of \$170,000. The Department has no plans to expand its ALPR inventory in FY 2026-27.

Fund 124 was established to account for Drug Asset Forfeiture revenues and expenditures. Asset Forfeiture funds are generated through the seizure of cash and property associated with criminal activity. Pursuant to state and federal regulations, asset forfeiture funds are restricted and may only be used for law enforcement operations, equipment, and related public safety purposes. These funds cannot be used for general governmental operations or other non-law enforcement-related purposes. Distribution of these funds to local law enforcement agencies, including the City of Burbank, is

administered through the County of Los Angeles Warrant Clearance Fund from the State of California and the United States Department of Justice.

Commitment to Transparency

The Department recognizes that the use of ALPR technology, particularly systems provided by Flock Safety, has generated public discussion and prompted questions from the community. These concerns are taken seriously, and transparency remains a top priority for the Department. In support of this effort, the Department developed an Information Guide¹ to provide the public with a clear explanation of the configuration, governance, auditing, and use restrictions associated with Flock Safety technology in the City of Burbank. This guide also outlines the safeguards in place to ensure compliance with California law, City policy, and community expectations related to privacy and civil liberties.

Importantly, the Department does not share ALPR data for immigration enforcement purposes, and access to ALPR information is strictly governed by California law, Department policy, user access controls, and auditing requirements. Access to the system is limited to authorized personnel for legitimate law enforcement and investigative purposes only.

The Department's ALPR program is designed as a focused investigative tool intended to assist with specific criminal investigations and public safety incidents. The system is not used for generalized surveillance or monitoring of individuals' daily activities. Data access is limited, retained for a limited duration consistent with policy and law, and subject to auditing and oversight requirements intended to ensure accountability and appropriate use.

At the April 15, 2026, Police Commission meeting, the Department provided an overview of its use of ALPR cameras and the technology's significant role in solving crimes and supporting the City Council's public safety priorities. Following discussion and deliberation, the Police Commission did not recommend that the City Council make any changes to the Department's current ALPR program².

Flock ALPR Program Overview

Currently, the Department utilizes 57 fixed location ALPR cameras at strategic locations throughout the City as a supplemental investigative tool. The cameras assist with criminal investigations, the recovery of stolen vehicles, the identification of suspect vehicles, and the development of investigative leads.

¹ <https://www.burbankca.gov/web/police-department/flock-safety>

² https://burbank.granicus.com/player/clip/11262?view_id=44&redirect=true

Additionally, ALPR cameras serve as a force multiplier by leveraging technology to improve operational effectiveness. The system enhances the Department's ability to investigate criminal activity more efficiently, reducing the time, workload, and costs associated with patrol and investigative operations while improving overall operational efficiency.

Program Outcomes

Since implementation, ALPR cameras have assisted the Department with the following outcomes:

- Cases cleared by arrest: 188
- Investigative leads generated: 214
- Cases cleared by other means: 61
- Arrests made: 257
- Stolen vehicles recovered: 90

The following examples illustrate how ALPR technology has assisted the Department in developing investigative leads, responding quickly to active incidents, recovering stolen property, and supporting the resolution of criminal investigations:

- The Los Angeles Police Department notified the Burbank Police Department about a series of robberies targeting landscapers throughout the region. Detectives utilized the Department's ALPR system to assist in identifying the suspect vehicle associated with the incidents. Several days later, officers were notified that the vehicle had entered the City at approximately the same time another robbery involving the same vehicle had just occurred nearby. Because officers were already responding in the vicinity, they were able to quickly locate the vehicle and take the suspects into custody. The arrest helped solve a series of robberies targeting individuals whose work tools had been stolen.
- A residential burglary occurred in a Burbank hillside neighborhood while the homeowners were away. The victims observed the suspects fleeing the residence through their home security system and provided officers with a description of the suspect vehicle, a distinct blue sedan. Using ALPR technology, officers were able to quickly identify the vehicle and determine it had traveled to South Pasadena. Burbank officers coordinated with the South Pasadena Police Department and the Department's helicopter support, ultimately locating the suspect vehicle outside another residence that was actively being burglarized. The suspect vehicle fled the scene, rammed several police vehicles, and the driver attempted to escape on foot after a short pursuit. The suspect was ultimately taken into custody. The use of investigative technology to rapidly identify the suspect assisted in resolving two burglary incidents within approximately one hour.

- The City experienced a series of thefts involving plumbing vans that were stolen overnight and later recovered after valuable tools and plumbing supplies had been removed. During the investigation, officers identified a vehicle believed to be associated with the thefts and used the ALPR system to assist in locating the vehicle. Several days later, officers located the suspect vehicle within the City while it was following another plumbing van. Officers successfully detained two suspects and recovered a plumbing van that had just been stolen from a victim in Glendale. Officers were able to return the van to the owner, preventing the loss of thousands of dollars in tools and equipment essential to the victim's work.

These examples represent a small sample of the many investigations in which ALPR technology has assisted the Department in rapidly identifying suspect or stolen vehicles, developing investigative leads, and coordinating timely responses with regional law enforcement partners. In many cases, the technology helps officers respond more quickly to active incidents, improves situational awareness, and provides investigative information that may not otherwise be readily available through traditional methods alone. ALPR technology has become an important public safety tool that supports the Department's ability to efficiently investigate crimes, recover stolen property, apprehend suspects, and respond to incidents in a timely manner. The technology enhances operational effectiveness and helps solve crimes that may otherwise remain unresolved due to limited suspect information or the inability to quickly identify involved vehicles.

FISCAL IMPACT

Approval of the Department's appropriation request within the FY 2026-27 budget will result in a \$170,000 appropriation from the restricted use Asset Forfeiture Fund.

CONCLUSION

The Department remains committed to the responsible, transparent, and lawful use of ALPR technology and recognizes the importance of balancing public safety needs with privacy and civil liberty protections. The Department maintains policies, auditing procedures, restricted access controls, and compliance measures consistent with California law to ensure that the technology is used appropriately and only for legitimate law enforcement purposes. The Department actively manages and monitors the ALPR program internally, including regular review of system access, usage activity, and compliance with Department policy.

ALPR technology has become an important public safety and investigative resource that enhances the Department's ability to efficiently prevent, investigate, and respond to criminal activity. The technology supports timely identification of stolen or suspect vehicles, improves investigative efficiency, enhances situational awareness during critical incidents, and allows personnel resources to be utilized more effectively. ALPR systems have assisted in solving crimes, recovering stolen vehicles and property, and supporting

timely law enforcement response to incidents impacting the community. The continued use of this technology, together with safeguards and oversight, provides meaningful public safety benefits and strengthens the Department's ability to protect and serve the Burbank community in a timely, effective, and accountable manner.

The Department will continue to evaluate and monitor the program to ensure compliance with applicable laws, operational effectiveness, and consistency with community expectations regarding privacy, accountability, and responsible technology use.