



*METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT
of Nashville and Davidson County*

John Cooper, Mayor

October 22, 2021

John C. Drake
Chief of Police

Andres Martinez
Chair
Community Oversight Board
222 2nd Avenue North, Suite 370-M
Nashville, TN 37201

Dear Chair Martinez:

In response to your recent letter to me inquiring about license plate readers, I am pleased to provide the following information:

1. Any steps that MNPD has already taken to test, purchase, or access LPR systems?

A: The MNPD has not taken any steps to initiate the procurement process for LPR deployment. Any such purchase would have to go through the Metropolitan Government's purchasing processes. The MNPD also has not entered into any MOU's or contracts to access LPR systems.

In an effort to better understand how LPR equipment and systems work, the MNPD, last month, was loaned a single, mobile trailer from Motorola/Vigilant Solutions. Police IT has used this opportunity to learn about the process surrounding LPR equipment setup and location placement limitations. This is similar to a process that was followed prior to the implementation of body-worn cameras where Police IT evaluated various body camera placement and recording issues. As a part of this evaluation, a limited number of officers, primarily detectives, have been provided access to this mobile LPR system. Any data captured during this test remains confidential and not a public record, as provided by state law.

2. Any current uses of LPR's or LPR data by MNPD.

A: The only additional uses of LPR data by the MNPD would be information supplied by another agency who utilized their LPR systems to assist the MNPD in investigating criminal activity (e.g., THP, Airport Police, Belle Meade Police, etc.) or information from a privately owned device (such as a neighborhood or business providing data to a detective) to assist the MNPD in a criminal investigation.

3. The number of privately owned LPR's that MNPD receives data from.

A: Zero. MNPD detectives may be provided LPR data from a privately owned camera following a crime, but that is a manual process, much like a citizen providing surveillance footage from a privately owned camera.

4. MNPD's plans for LPR deployment if an LPR bill passes or does not pass.

A: Given the wide variation of proposed limitations on the acquisition and use of LPR systems, it's too early to say what, if any, use the MNPD will make of LPR technology.

5. The status of any MNPD policies or standard operating procedures governing the use of LPR's.

A: Given that it's unclear whether the MNPD will seek to acquire LPR's, and the fact that both pending LPR bills specifically legislate the content of policy on LPR's, no policy or SOP has been formulated.

In addition to your questions, Director Fitchard forwarded to Commander Carlos Lara, our liaison to the COB, questions from board member Campbell-Gooch. I will take this opportunity to address those as well.

1. Has MNPD been borrowing LPRs from other Police Departments? If so, for what purpose? and which departments? Which Nashville precincts are currently using them?

A: No, the MNPD has not been borrowing LPRs from other agencies, although other agencies equipped with them (i.e., THP) have assisted the MNPD in the investigation of crimes, including the identification and recovery of stolen vehicles in large parking lots/areas. With respect to placement of the trailer discussed previously in this correspondence, sites in the Midtown Hills, North, and West precincts have been used in an effort to identify and understand the technology and its abilities or limitations, limitations on equipment placement, and infrastructure needs.

2. Is the MNPD discussing or in the process of working to set up a Police foundation? Similar to the Atlanta Police Foundation?

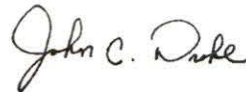
A: The MNPD, as an entity of the Metropolitan Government, cannot establish a private foundation. I am aware of discussion in the private sector about a Nashville foundation, but such discussion is in its infancy. Police foundations, like the one in Atlanta, are private organizations established by members of the community.

3. Will MNPD implement LPR's without a bill regulating their usage? In other words, if neither of the LPR bills passes through the city council will MNPD move forward with implementation? If the answer is no, who from MNPD is willing to go on record.

A: See response 4 (above). As you may be aware, state and local law currently permit the MNPDP to utilize LPRs, and none of the proposed bills would disallow their use altogether. While the MNPDP is monitoring the status of these bills, we have taken no steps, before or after the introduction of pending legislation, to purchase LPR systems. This is relatively new technology which we are still evaluating. If neither of these currently pending bills pass, the existing Metro Ordinance (MCL 13.08.080) and existing state law (TCA § 55-10-302) would continue to regulate any future use by MNPDP.

Thank you for these questions. On a sidenote, Commander Lara takes his responsibility as liaison to the COB very seriously. If some members have not yet had the opportunity to personally meet him at your meetings, I hope that they will take advantage of doing so.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John C. Drake". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "D".

John C. Drake
Chief of Police

c: Vice Mayor Jim Shulman