Resolution 2026-04 - A Resolution Establishing Immediate Transparency, Limits, And A Public Review Process For Automated License Plate Reader Technology In Bloomington

Preamble

Whereas, the Common Council of the City recognizes and affirms the community's commitment to civil liberties, including freedom of movement and speech, due process of law, and the principle that government should not create standing surveillance capabilities absent necessity, strict limits, and democratic accountability; and

Whereas, "Automated License Plate Reader" or "ALPR" technology means any fixed, mobile, or portable camera system—together with any associated software or service—that captures images of motor vehicles and automatically detects, extracts, or converts license plate numbers (and related vehicle descriptors such as make, model, color, date/time, and location) into searchable records or alerts; and

Whereas, ALPR systems collect and store location-linked data about large numbers of residents and visitors who are not suspected of wrongdoing, and experience shows that surveillance infrastructure tends to expand in use and scope over time unless constrained by binding rules; and

Whereas, the City currently utilizes ALPR technology and related services provided by Flock Safety, which operates as a privately owned, vendor-managed platform, meaning the City does not fully control the software ecosystem, product roadmap, integrations, or the ways the platform may evolve; and

Whereas, public trust in law enforcement and local government depends not only on good-faith use today, but on durable safeguards that hold under changing conditions—leadership changes, policy changes, vendor changes, or external pressure; and

Whereas, the Council finds that any use of ALPR technology must meet a heightened standard of necessity and proportionality, must be subject to strict purpose limitations, short retention, auditable access, meaningful reporting, and hard limits on sharing—especially any pathway that could make access easy beyond local intent; and

Whereas, the Council further finds that the strongest protection for civil liberties is restraint: data not collected cannot be misused, compelled, breached, or normalized;

Be It Resolved by the Common Council of the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana, That:

Section 1. The Council states its opposition to unchecked, generalized surveillance and affirms that any technology capable of tracking the public at scale must meet a heightened standard of necessity and proportionality, with strict limits, public transparency, and democratic oversight.

Section 2. The Chief of Police and the Office of the Mayor shall, within 6 weeks of the passage of this resolution, provide a briefing to the Common Council on the City's ALPR program, including the City's contract(s) and relationship with Flock Safety, and the current operational use of ALPR cameras and related equipment.

Section 3. The police department shall provide a written briefing packet to the Council no later than seven (7) days prior to the public briefing, describing in plain language: the number of ALPR devices in operation and their general placement; the contract term(s), renewal dates, termination provisions, and total program costs to date; the data retention period(s); the current access controls and training requirements; and the current rules governing searches, auditing, reporting, and data sharing.

Section 4. The Chief of Police shall explicitly address in the briefing what controls are currently in place—or are technically feasible under existing agreements—to ensure the following best-practice safeguards: narrowly authorized purposes; short retention windows; role-based access; query logging; routine auditing; and public reporting

(including volume of searches, categories of cases, hit rates, and errors); and hard limits on data sharing, especially any pathway that could enable easy access beyond local intent.

Section 5. The Office of the Mayor shall impose an immediate pause on any expansion of the ALPR program until the requested briefing is completed, including a pause on adding new cameras, expanding features, creating new access pathways, enabling new integrations, or increasing the number of user accounts, except as required to maintain existing obligations or ensure continuity of essential operations.

Section 6. The Council states its intent to develop and consider an ordinance to establish durable rules governing the acquisition and use of ALPR technology in Bloomington—regardless of vendor—including binding limits on purpose, retention, access and auditing, transparency and reporting, sharing restrictions, and periodic reauthorization or sunset provisions.

Section 7. The Council will use the information provided through the briefing and written materials to make determinations both about Bloomington's current relationship with Flock Safety and about the broader governance framework the City should adopt for ALPR and similar surveillance technologies now and in the future.

Section 5: Severability. If any section, sentence or provision of this resolution, or the application thereof to any person or circumstances shall be declared invalid, such invalidity shall not affect any of the other sections, sentences, provisions or applications of this resolution which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this resolution are declared to be severable.

Section 6: Effective Date. This Resolution shall be in full force and effect from and after its adoption by the Common Council and approval by the Mayor.

Passed

Passed by the Common Council of the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana, upon the _04_ day of ___March___, 2026.

_____
Isak Nti Asare
President, Bloomington Common Council

Attestation of Bloomington City Clerk:

_____
Nicole Bolden
Clerk, City of Bloomington

Presentation by Bloomington City Clerk:

Presented by me to the Mayor of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana, upon this _06_ day of ___March___, 2026:

_____
Nicole Bolden
Clerk, City of Bloomington

Approval by Mayor

Signed and approved by me upon this upon the _12_ day of ___March___, 2026:

Kerry Thomson
Mayor, City of Bloomington

Synopsis

This Resolution sponsored by Councilmember Asare requires the Chief of Police and Office of the Mayor to brief the Common Council on the City of Bloomington's Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) program, with specified information provided in plain language writing. It also calls on the Office of the Mayor to impose an immediate pause on any expansion of the ALPR program until the briefing is completed. Finally, this Resolution states the Common Council's intent to consider adoption of an Ordinance to establish durable rules governing acquisition and use of ALPR technology by the City of Bloomington.

Note: At the March 4, 2026 Regular Session, the Council adopted Amendment 01 to this resolution. The amendment, sponsored by Councilmember Piedmont-Smith, added a timeline for the reporting called for in Section 2 of the resolution.

Distributed to: Clerk, Council Attorney, Bloomington Police Department, Legal, and Mayor.