



CITY OF PULLMAN WASHINGTON

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Pullman Police Department's Safety Camera Initiative (SCI) Project Public Forum on February 15, 2012 Questions and Answers

1. Within the larger context of national issues, including increased militarization, domestic terrorism, and increased law enforcement powers:

A. Is the capacity of the central server large enough to potentially handle hundreds of cameras, or is it a relatively small server that will need to be upgraded in the future?

We will develop the system to adequately handle the video capacity of cameras acquired for this project. In the event that more cameras are added to the system in the future, we anticipate the need to add to server capacity.

B. Can cameras at traffic intersections be linked to the proposed camera system?

The cameras at traffic intersections are City Engineering cameras that detect the presence of vehicles for the purpose of regulating the traffic signals. While the potential exists, there are no plans at this time for the Police Department to receive the video from those cameras.

2. The resolution on video footage that is often shown on local TV news stations appear to be too poor in quality to identify individual suspects. What type of cameras, lighting, or other tactics will be employed to address video resolution (quality) issues?

There are many different types of cameras available for a wide variety of purposes. Our request to potential vendors is to have the ability to identify persons involved in criminal activity who are within a reasonable distance of the cameras under both daytime and nighttime lighting conditions.

3. Question about ownership: Since the purchase of the cameras is federally funded, will the cameras and other equipment actually be owned by the City of Pullman or will it be the property of the federal government; and can the federal government order the City of Pullman to use the equipment for purposes other than originally planned at some point down the road?

The cameras will be purchased and owned by the City of Pullman. We are expected to utilize equipment purchased with grant funds for the purpose of achieving our stated grant goals during the grant period, which is through September, 2013. After that time the cameras will be under the complete control of the City without any Federal government direction.

4. How long will the decision process be on the equipment vendors, and will this information be available at the third public meeting to be held in March?

We are in the process of reviewing vendor submissions in response to our Request for Proposal (RFP). The review process may be completed prior to the meeting scheduled for March 21, 2012, so we may have selected vendors by that meeting. However, there is still a negotiation process that occurs after vendor selection that further defines some details and specifics involving hardware and software.

5. Prepared statement was read, outlining four main reasons for opposing the installation of cameras on College Hill:

- A. City should have refused the money, since the US government has to borrow it to give it to us, and we don't really need the equipment.

Decisions about the allocation of Federal monies are made by Congress and Federal agencies acting pursuant to Congressional appropriations bills, not at the local level. Had Pullman not participated in the grant program, or refused the funding, those same funds would have been applied to other projects in other communities. There would have been no net savings at the Federal level. Given the option, we prefer that Pullman's tax dollars be returned to our community.

- B. A \$300,000 system will probably take some \$50,000/year minimum to run it. I'm not sure that is a wise use of money.

The costs of program administration were taken into account when making the decision to apply for funding for this project. We believe that our current City IT staff can maintain the system without incurring additional personnel costs. There will be additional costs after product warranty and maintenance agreements expire and the hardware ages. At that time we will conduct a cost-benefit analysis to determine if we will commit additional funds to the cameras and infrastructure.

- C. Violent crime and neighborhood disorder are not really Pullman's problems, and cameras are not a good solution to either should they arise.

Pullman Officers responded to nearly 900 calls involving disputes, disorderly conduct and assaults in 2011. Over half of disturbances occur on College Hill,

and about 15% of those occur in the relatively small area known as Adams Mall. Pullman has averaged over 25 aggravated assaults annually over the past three years. Aggravated assaults are those committed with the purpose of inflicting severe bodily injury, and injuries have included broken jaws, broken legs and concussions. We believe the use of the cameras will not only aid in the successful investigation and prosecution of these serious crimes, but their impact will also result in fewer disturbances and serious assaults, making Pullman a safer community.

D. It's Orwellian.

We completely understand concerns about privacy, which is why we have engaged the community in a transparent process to develop our internal camera use policy. We believe safety in the Adams Mall area, particularly to students, is a serious concern. Everyone should have the freedom to visit anywhere in Pullman, including Adams Mall, without fear of serious assault. Grocery stores, banks, retail stores, and other business utilize cameras to protect their assets. We consider residents and visitors to Pullman as our "assets" that we have a duty to protect, and we will use all available resources to make Pullman a safer community.

6. Aren't cameras already in lots of areas, like Safeway, Walmart, and banks?

Yes. As mentioned above, cameras are present at many places we go during our daily activities, not to mention the prevalence of cameras and video recorders on smart phones.

7. Are cameras going to be located in Adams Mall?

Cameras will only be placed in public areas, not private businesses. It should be noted, however, that Stubblefield's does operate their own camera system in their business located inside of Adams Mall.

8. Policy question, Section 4.02 – Who will these people be, and how will they be determined?

Policy Section 4.02 states: *Except as provided for other law enforcement agencies conducting criminal investigations, review of retained video recordings by non-Pullman Police Department employees must be approved by the Chief of Police. The review of the recordings must be done at the Pullman Police Department.*

This policy section is an effort to address unanticipated requests to view video and to ensure their purpose for viewing is legitimate.

9. Is facial recognition software part of this program, and will it be added?

Facial recognition software will not be a part of this project and we have no plans at this time to incorporate it in the future. Recent Federal cases have imposed limitations on the ability of law enforcement to track individuals, so any proposed future use would involve an assessment of compliance with State and Federal laws.

10. Who will have access to the video footage?

Police Officers and civilian personnel at the Pullman Police Department will have various levels of authorization to access live and stored video. These details are yet to be worked out and will be determined on a need to know basis. Video associated with criminal cases will be provided to the Prosecuting Attorney for criminal prosecution purposes. Public records laws govern accessibility to the public of video retained by the Police Department.

11. Can the person monitoring the cameras turn them on and off, and who is in control of turning the cameras on and off?

We do not anticipate that the cameras will be turned off; however it is possible that a feature of the cameras and/or software could include motion sensors that will cause the cameras to record only when activity is detected.

12. Will civil infractions, such as littering, parking, and "public foolishness", be investigated, enforced, and/or prosecuted with the cameras?

Targeted activities include violent crimes and neighborhood disorders. This means more specifically fighting, assaults, and incidents/activities that lead to those crimes. We don't have the staff, or the desire, to monitor the cameras to enforce minor offenses such as littering. However, we will intervene if we believe there is a concern about personal safety.

13. What serious crimes are the cameras supposed to monitor?

Serious assaults, fighting, and incidents/activities that leads to those crimes.

14. Who will pay for the camera program when the grant runs out?

We believe that our current City IT staff can maintain the system without incurring additional personnel costs. There will be additional costs after product warranty and maintenance agreements expire as the hardware ages. At that time we will conduct a cost-benefit analysis to determine if we will commit additional funds to the project.

15. Are there off-campus locations where the cameras could be placed, or possibly moved to in the future?

All of the cameras will be placed off-campus; Adams Mall is off-campus. Initial analysis reveals the area around Adams Mall as the area in Pullman with the highest concentration of grant targeted incidents: public disturbances and serious assaults. Other potential locations include Colorado, California, and A & B Streets. Additional research will be conducted to further refine that analysis to determine specific locations for camera placement. Decisions about placement of cameras will be based on a mix of crime statistics analysis, interviews and input from local stakeholders, and technical specifications of the equipment used.

It will be important to maintain all of the cameras in the same locations throughout the grant period so the impact of the cameras on disturbances and crime can be properly assessed at the locations initially identified as best for camera placement. Most of the cameras will be installed to be relatively stationary, although we hope that we will design at least one camera with the ability to be more portable in nature so that it can be moved if needed at the conclusion of the grant.

16. Several people recently got back from Washington D.C. for a grant-related conference. Who went and what was the purpose of the conference?

Those working directly on the grant project from the Pullman Police Department and the researchers from WSU were required, as a condition of the grant, to attend a mandatory grantee conference in Washington DC. The conference was convened to encourage and facilitate cross-project collaboration and learning, ensure working relationships between law enforcement and their research partners, and to reinforce the goal of having the funded projects serve as national exemplars of best policing practices. The conference costs were completely funded by the grant.

17. Why are none of the cameras being placed on campus?

This grant was awarded to the City of Pullman to address violent crimes and neighborhood disorders in Pullman. Although the WSU campus is located in Pullman, the University is State property and the WSU Police Department is the law enforcement agency with jurisdictional responsibility for incidents that occur on campus. The Pullman Police Department provides support and assistance to the WSU Police Department, and vice-versa, however each agency takes primary responsibility for public safety in their respective jurisdictions.

18. Do you think that cameras might displace crime to other areas?

It is potentially possible that offenders might simply move their activities to the neighborhoods immediately surrounding our area of focus. Interestingly, however, most research on the displacement of crime that might result from targeted police

efforts shows that not only is crime not displaced to surrounding areas, but rather a diffusion of benefit often occurs (for a review of such research, see Braga, Anthony A. (2001), "The effects of hot spots policing on crime", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 578(1), 104-125.). Diffusions of benefits occur when the benefits experienced in the targeted areas spreads into surrounding neighborhoods. Researchers believe that this occurs because criminals and potential criminals cannot be certain where concentrated police efforts end and where they can once again "safely" commit crimes. Consequently, most neighborhoods immediately surrounding targeted police efforts actually experience similar positive effects as the target communities, even though they receive no different police efforts. Given that we have no reason to believe that Pullman and College Hill should differ in a systematic way from previously researched sites, we expect that such a diffusion of benefits is more likely to occur in on College Hill than any displacement of crime.

19. Because there will be signs posted indicating the presence of the cameras, has the possibility of naming the cameras been considered (i.e. "MOM is watching")?

Not at this time, but we will take suggestions.

20. Please discuss the pros and cons of dummy cameras, and whether they will be instituted as part of this project?

Dummy cameras will not be used during the grant period, although they could potentially be added once the grant has been completed. Because this initiative is attempting to determine not only the potential deterrent effects of live cameras, but also whether the video evidence captured by live cameras could be used to increase case closures and criminal convictions, dummy cameras will not be used as a part of this project. Thus, if we were to install dummy cameras, we would not be able to empirically assess whether any possible reductions in crime were due to the deterrent effects of live vs. dummy cameras or the increased number of case closures and convictions.

21. Are dummy cameras effective?

There has been some research that suggests dummy cameras can be effective tools in reducing crime (see Clarke, Ronald V., & Weisburd, David. (1994). Diffusion of Crime Control Benefits: Observations on the Reverse of Displacement. *Crime Prevention Studies*, 2, 165-184.). However, due to the reasons outlined above, dummy cameras will not be used during the grant period.

22. What are the other locations being considered for camera placement, or was College Hill always the focus?

Initial analysis reveals the area around Adams Mall as the area in Pullman with the highest concentration of grant targeted incidents: public disturbances and serious assaults. Other potential locations include Colorado, California, and A & B Streets. Additional research will be conducted to further refine that analysis to determine specific locations for camera placement. Decisions about placement of cameras will be based on a mix of crime statistics analysis, interviews and input from local stakeholders, and technical specifications of the equipment used.

23. Will someone actually be looking at the feed at all times, or only if something is going on?

No one will be assigned to monitor the live feed; however the live feed will be accessible to on-duty police officers and possibly records specialists and dispatchers. The role of the records specialists and dispatchers would be to pass along their observations to the patrol officers if warranted.

24. Regarding the reference in the policy to the possibility of private cameras feeding into the system. Why would this be done and what is the benefit?

There are currently no plans to add non-police department cameras to the network. However, the possibility does exist for this to occur in the future, such as for a bank to give the police department access to their cameras. This would be beneficial, as an example, when officers are responding to a robbery alarm or disturbance call at a bank. The ability to see the activity inside the bank would increase officer safety and make their response more efficient.

25. Is there any reporting mechanism at the end of the grant period which will show the results of the project and effectiveness of the cameras on reducing crime?

Yes. In addition to the final reports submitted to the Department of Justice, the research partners from WSU anticipate publishing several research manuscripts in peer-reviewed scholarly journals. The Pullman Police Department will also provide research results on our website.