



# CITY OF PULLMAN WASHINGTON

## Police Department

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### **Pullman Police Department's Safety Camera Initiative (SCI) Project Public Forum on March 21, 2012 Questions and Answers**

1. Regarding the signs that will be posted in the area, how will they be worded? Concerned about people seeking them out to do something stupid with the intent of watching it online later.

In accordance with Washington State law, signs will be posted in camera coverage areas to notify the public that their activities in that area are being recorded. A camera pole may not provide the best exposure in a particular location, so sign placement will be determined on maximum exposure. The exact wording on the signs has not yet been determined. We do have a concern about those who would want their actions viewed online, which is one factor we considered when determining not to make the live video stream available to the general public.

2. Question about the 3% of the grant budget for "grant mandated training"?

Those working directly on the grant project from the Pullman Police Department and the researchers from WSU are required, as a condition of the grant, to attend two or three grant conferences in Washington DC. The first 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.

3. How much of a role will the College Hill officers have on impacting the project, determining camera placement, etc.?

Decisions about placement of cameras will be based on a mix of crime statistics analysis, interviews and input from local stakeholders, input from police officers (including College Hill Officers), and technical specifications of the equipment used.

4. Will the presence of cameras reduce or change officer presence and/or foot patrols on College Hill?

The cameras will augment our currently policing strategies, not replace them. We do not envision any reduction in police presence as a result of the cameras. In fact,

there may well be an increase of officer presence if officers are responding to activity they view via the live video stream in an effort to prevent incidents from escalating.

5. Have you looked into the United Kingdom (UK) Home Office studies that show that closed circuit television (CCTV) has little or no deterrent effect on crime?

Yes, the research on the deterrent effect of CCTV is mixed both abroad and here at home. Some research shows that CCTV cameras do deter criminal behavior, and that even “dummy” cameras (i.e., non-functional cameras) can have an effect. Other research shows that neither dummy nor active cameras deter crime. For a review of the research 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, because the purpose of these safety cameras IS NOT solely prevention through deterrence, we are not overly concerned about whether or not the cameras deter crime (see response to next question).

6. Follow-up: What about the sections in the UK Home Office studies that specifically indicate that CCTV has no deterrent effect on impulsive crimes, which are exactly the type of crimes this project hopes to target?

First, some studies by the UK Home Office find that CCTV cameras (and even dummy cameras) do in fact deter some crimes (see the Clarke & Weisburd piece referenced above). But, even if the cameras have no effect on impulsive (or any other type of) crimes, we expect that they may still have a positive impact on crime via 1) increased successful prosecutions of crimes (through the use of evidence from the cameras) or 2) increased capacity for officers to intervene in potentially criminal or dangerous situations that might escalate into more serious situations (i.e., an officer might see a raucous crowd gathering and be able to respond before the situation gets out of hand). In this way, the safety cameras may be able to positively impact all types of crimes, impulsive or otherwise.

7. Expressed concern based upon the types of video images typically produced by CCTV and that the images would not be useful to officers.

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.

8. What type of crime displacement do we anticipate and what steps are being taken to alleviate or address this displacement?

(From Public Forum 2 FAQ) 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.). Quite the contrary to crimes being displaced into surrounding areas, diffusions of benefits occur when the same benefits that targeted areas experience spreads into surrounding neighborhoods so that they also experience reductions in crime. 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.

9. Heard a rumor that camera monitoring will not be manned all of the time, and that it will be just available to officers in their patrol cars. Will it be streamed live online for public viewing?

We have no affirmative plans to actively monitor the live video feed continually. If a call is received in an area where there is camera coverage, then officers, dispatchers and police records staff can view the area in question to assist in incident assessment and response needs. Monitoring by on-duty police staff may also occur during peak activity times in camera coverage areas. Live video feed will be viewable at the police station and in police cars.

The possibility of allowing access of the live video feed to the general public has been considered. Most of the input we have received has not been in favor of public accessibility. Some reasons include an encouragement for some to act out for the live video and loss of control of the video since anyone can capture and reuse the images and videos.

10. Are the cameras going to be stationary?

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.

If the cameras are shown by the project evaluation to have had a positive impact on crime and disorder in the area, they will likely remain in place for the duration of their useful life. If, on the other hand, the cameras are ultimately determined by the evaluation to have had no impact or a negative impact on crime and disorder in the area, the Pullman Police Department may consider removing them or moving them

to other locations. The impact of the cameras, and decisions regarding their status, will not be determined until the end of the grant period at the earliest.

11. Question about the research portion of the budget: Who are we hiring and will the research be available to the public?

Mike Gaffney & Zachary Hays of WSU are the Primary Investigators for the research portion of the project. They will hire a number of trained undergraduate and graduate students to engage in the data collection process (e.g., conducting & transcribing interviews, managing survey administration, and some data entry & analysis). All research that comes out of the grant project will be made public either through the Bureau of Justice Assistance (grant provider) or through scholarly journal publications.

12. I strongly believe that cameras will increase police efficiency and ability to respond to calls, which leads to increased safety for the community.

Thank you for the comment. We do believe the cameras will increase safety.

13. Wouldn't money be better spent employing more officers and assigning them to these areas? If I am being attacked, cameras cannot intervene; only people can.

The grant is premised that, in the current economy, many law enforcement agencies are facing personnel layoffs and resource reductions while struggling with chronic crime. Developing tactics and strategies that are effective, efficient, and economical, as measured by reduced crime and higher case closure rates, would be of great benefit to law enforcement agencies in this era of budget constraints and limited staffing. The goal of the Smart Policing Initiative (SPI) is to identify those tactics, practices, and strategies. Consequently the SPI grants are seeking strategies that do not rely on additional personnel. Even if the grant funded additional personnel, it would take about six months to get them trained, only to be laid off in another 18 months (at the conclusion of the grant) because we do not have the ability to sustain non-grant funded additional personnel.

The advantage of cameras and video over personnel is that they can maintain a multi-location presence 24/7. We believe that the cameras will have a much greater impact by reducing the chance of an assault than by relying on the chance that one of our officers will be at the exact right place at the exact right time to do the same.

14. I don't like the idea of cameras. I don't like being watched. I am a law abiding citizen, and I feel that putting these cameras is violating our privacy. Cameras can't make me safer, and I feel that reliance on the cameras will negatively impact officer response time.

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. Injuries from assaults 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.

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.

As was mentioned previously, the cameras will augment our currently policing strategies, not replace them. We do not envision any reduction in police presence as a result of the cameras. In fact, there may well be an increase of officer presence if officers are responding to what they view via the live video stream in an effort to prevent incidents from escalating.

15. Since this project was funded with public funds, my expectation for the project was that there would be a live feed available for viewing by the public. Why isn't this being done?

The possibility of allowing access of the live video feed to the general public has been considered. Most of the input we have received has not been in favor of public accessibility. Some reasons include an encouragement for some to act out for the live video and loss of control of the video since anyone can capture and reuse the images and videos. Since privacy has been the concern expressed most often during our public forums, we believe allowing public access would be contradictory to guarding privacy.

16. Follow-up: Why can't the department pick screen shot/still images or limited video streams and have that available to the public?

In addition to the reasons described above, this would take a significant amount of staff time to accomplish with little positive return. The goal of the grant is to develop tactics and strategies that are effective, efficient, and economical; this type of activity would certainly counter gains made in those areas.

17. One of the main concerns that I have heard expressed by other students is who is watching the police watch us? There have been instances elsewhere where DOT and other public cameras were abused, with employees zooming in on the private

parts of individual citizens, for example. What mechanisms are in place to prevent abuse?

This is one of the reasons we are soliciting public input for our camera use policy, so the public can make suggestions for policies that will address potential abuses. Criteria have been established for camera use and we will implement procedures and protocols so that all camera use by personnel will be tracked and reviewed.

18. What about the possibility of having volunteers monitoring the cameras? Maybe during peak hours, and after being trained by the police or dispatchers?

This is entirely possible and is a good suggestion. We will explore this further after camera installation and we have a little bit more experience with the utilization of the cameras and video.

19. Do you believe that the cameras will have an effect on other types of crime, like sexual assaults and date rape?

While we do not have many sexual assaults and date rapes occur in open, public areas, video captured in the area could be of evidentiary value during those investigations, such as videos of the suspect and/or victim.

20. When do you anticipate the camera locations to be identified/determined?

While we know that the general location of the cameras will be the Adams Mall area, the exact locations will be determined during contract negotiations with the selected camera vendor. That will likely take place between May and July, 2012.

21. I would like to reiterate that I don't think that the cameras will impact the behavior of drunken students.

That may very well be the case; however, we do not expect the cameras to have an impact on crime and public safety via only deterrence. Rather, we think that in addition to *some* deterrent effect, the cameras will also allow the police department to view behaviors and activities that could turn into crimes without police intervention (e.g., a crowd of angry people forming). Finally, the cameras should also assist the police department by providing video evidence of crimes that did occur, which, in turn, should result in more successful prosecutions of criminal behavior.

22. I think if the video feeds were made public and a lot of people started watching it, you could have 40 people call 911 about the same incident, which could impede response time for other emergencies?

You make a very valid point and it is another good reason not to make the live video feed accessible to the general public.

23. Are we going to do a cost/benefit analysis on the benefit of the cameras at the conclusion of the project?

A cost-benefit analysis was not included in the original research portion of the grant proposal, but is something that could be conducted and certainly will be considered.

24. Is the grant ongoing, and are there funds for project maintenance, repairs, and operation?

The grant period is for two years. 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.

25. Follow-up: Will a cost/benefit analysis be done at the end of the project to determine the feasibility of keeping the project going, and will that process be open to public?

If a cost-benefit analysis is conducted, the results will be made available to the public either through the US Bureau of Justice Assistance or through scholarly journal publications.