



CITY OF KNOXVILLE

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August 10, 2012

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Ms. Hedy Weinberg
Executive Director
ACLU Foundation of Tennessee
P. O. Box 120160
Nashville, TN 37212

Dear Ms. Weinberg,

Your letter of July 30, 2012 to Chief of Police David Rausch has been forwarded to me for response. The City of Knoxville has never owned an automatic license plate reader ("ALPR"), although for the last two years it has had such a reader on complimentary loan from a vendor, PIPS Technology located here in Knoxville, for testing and evaluation purposes. Given that circumstance, many of the records you have requested simply do not exist. With that in mind, and in an attempt to provide meaningful responses to your open records requests rather simply saying "no such records exist", I would provide you with the following information:

1. Because we are still testing and evaluating the ALPR for the vendor, the Knoxville Police Department does not have a written policy for use of the ALPR or for storing, accessing and sharing data obtained by the ALPR. The current system on loan to the Knoxville Police Department is installed in a marked police cruiser and is a stand-alone unit utilizing an independent computer installed in the vehicle. Selected information from NCIC or other databases is downloaded and installed into the computer manually. The ALPR system is not linked to any live database and cannot query any database that is not loaded into it.

The conspicuously marked police 'fleet' car in which the ALPR is installed is assigned to the KCDC Operations Administrator's office. The vehicle is primarily used by officers working supplemental (extra duty) patrol assignments administered through the KCDC Operations Office. These officers, because of their regular assignment, have not been assigned a marked police vehicle to them. In most instances the ALPR system is not utilized during the assigned use of the vehicle.

Officers using the vehicle and the ALPR system are trained in the operation and concept of how the system works and the mechanics of powering on and off the system. There is a pass-phrase required for the operator to log onto the system.

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Information obtained through the ALPR system is manually retrieved from the vehicle and transferred to a desktop computer which has the unique PIPS software installed. The information gathered from the reader is available only through an internal computer network to personnel in the Knoxville Police Department's Crime Analysis Unit and the KCDC Operations Administrator. Personnel can only access information after entering their unique log-in identifications. Information shared within the police department is listed as "Law Enforcement Sensitive."

2. Because the system is being tested and evaluated at no cost to the Knoxville Police Department, there are no such records

3. The Knoxville Police Department has developed a "Tag Reader Log" form, a copy of which is attached hereto, to document use of the ALPR system and any database matches, and the Department maintains a record of queries of ALPR system data queries. As you might expect, the query record contains information regarding ongoing investigations and/or prosecutions and is therefore not subject to public inspection. With regard to the subparts of your request:

- a. The ALPR used by the Knoxville Police Department acquires an infrared image and a color photograph focused on the license plate, a wider view color photograph image, and the GPS coordinates of the location of the system when the information was obtained.
- b. There is no specific data available as to volume of information obtained. It depends on usage.
- c. One ALPR system used in a testing and evaluation program.
- d. One ALPR system used in a testing and evaluation program.
- e. Zero.
- f. That technical information is maintained by the vendor.

4. Because the ALPR system is on loan for testing and evaluation, no decisions have been made regarding retention of data. Thus, the information noted above regarding images and GPS location is stored, at this time, for an indefinite period. Data from November 2010, when the APLR system was first loaned to the Knoxville Police Department, through September 2011 was corrupted and lost as a consequence of a computer transfer, so at this time the Knoxville Police Department has retained information from the ALPR system only since October 2011. As of August 2, 2012 the current count on license plate reads is 118,454.

5. Because the ALPR system is on loan for testing and evaluation, there is no written policy regarding access to the data, but the data is used only internally and viewed as "Law Enforcement Sensitive", meaning that only persons within the Knoxville Police Department are granted access to information obtained from the ALPR. Only authorized crime analysis technicians and the administrator have access to the data files for search purposes.

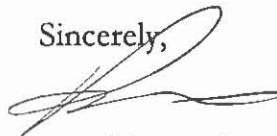
6. Images and location information from ALPR system are shared only within the Knoxville Police Department. The department is not part of any network of agencies which shares ALPR data, and the Knoxville Police Department does not access any ALPR information from any other agency, nor does it have any policy in place to share such information.

7. The police department does not access any ALPR information from any other agency.

8. There are no training documents used in training operators of the system. Officers are instructed in the login procedures, nomenclature of the system, how it captures images, and how the information is transferred. Officers are also given very strict instruction regarding the accuracy of want/warrant information or any other information from databases entered into the ALPR system. Officers are instructed that any want/warrant information must be confirmed before any enforcement action is taken, and that such information is a 'snap-shot' from a specific point in time and therefore may not be accurate at a later time.

Given the status of the ALPR used by the Knoxville Police Department, I believe this fully responds to your request of July 30. If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Ronald E. Mills

REM/bc

cc: Chief David Rausch
Deputy Chief Gary Price

Tag Reader 21069

Activity Log

Return to KCDC "Black Box"

Date:	Start Time:	End Time:	Total Hours:
Officer:	Call #:	Number of "Reads":	Number of Hits:

Special Assignment / Directed Patrol / Focus Area: (if any))

Verified Hit:	Disposition: (Attach copy of any paperwork)
Time:	
Location:	
Verified Hit:	Disposition: (Attach copy of any paperwork)
Time:	
Location:	
Verified Hit:	Disposition: (Attach copy of any paperwork)
Time:	
Location:	
Verified Hit:	Disposition: (Attach copy of any paperwork)
Time:	
Location:	
Verified Hit:	Disposition: (Attach copy of any paperwork)
Time:	
Location:	
Verified Hit:	Disposition: (Attach copy of any paperwork)
Time:	
Location:	

* Do not take through car wash. "Touch-less" or hand wash only.