

MEETING DATE:

October 12, 2009

CALL TO PODIUM:

John A. King, Chief of Police
Peter Cottrell, Director of IT

RESPONSIBLE STAFF:

Brian Helms
C. K. Bonvillain
Mary R. Whalen

AGENDA ITEM:

(please check one)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Presentation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Proclamation/Certificate
<input type="checkbox"/>	Appointment
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Hearing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Historic District
<input type="checkbox"/>	Consent Item
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ordinance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Resolution
<input type="checkbox"/>	Policy Discussion
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Work Session Discussion Item
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:

PUBLIC HEARING HISTORY:

(Please complete this section if agenda item is a public hearing)

Introduced	
Advertised	
Hearing Date	
Record Held Open	
Policy Discussion	

TITLE:
Crime/Surveillance Camera Update and Discussion

SUPPORTING BACKGROUND:
<p>On September 26, 2008, a grant in the amount of \$117,000 was formally approved by the US Dept of Justice, COPS Office to fund surveillance cameras in order to address issues related to gang activity. The grant specifically was approved for the cameras to be used in the City's main historic and commercial area, an area comprising commercial and entertainment venues and a mall with an adjoining transit center.</p> <p>By utilizing surveillance cameras with behavior analytics, GPD units can be alerted to suspicious or criminal activity and quickly respond as situations develop without having to wait for a citizen call.</p> <p>At this time the project has been pushed back to FY'11. The grant runs through December 25, 2010.</p>

DESIRED OUTCOME:
Hear presentation on tactical (portable) crime cameras and provide staff guidance on the issue of strategic (fixed) surveillance cameras.

Surveillance Cameras



Mayor & City Council
Work Session
October 12, 2009

Tactical Surveillance Cameras and Strategic Surveillance Cameras

- Tactical Surveillance Cameras:
 - portable
 - short-term deployment
 - specific purpose
- Strategic Surveillance Cameras:
 - fixed location
 - long-term deployment
 - address multiple issues in a specific area

GPD Tactical Surveillance Camera



Not “covert,” but not designed to be immediately recognizable as a surveillance camera.

GPD Tactical Surveillance Camera



A high resolution wireless camera with low-light capability.

GPD Tactical Surveillance Camera

- The ability to zoom in on faces of potential suspects or read vehicle tags at a distance of 50 yards.
- The ability to aim the camera at different angles (pan-tilt-zoom).

GPD Tactical Surveillance Camera



- Camera video can be monitored on an office PC and potentially from an officer's in-car mobile data computer.

GPD Tactical Surveillance Camera

Benefits:

- Can be quickly deployed for a variety of community concerns.
- Cameras direct officers to the exact location of in-progress criminal activity.
- Cameras assist in managing large scale incidents and special events, e.g., concerts.

Funding for Additional Tactical Surveillance Cameras

- Information Technology FY10 CIP funding in the amount of \$40,000.
- Information Technology FY10 CIP funding in the amount of \$7,500 for graffiti cameras.

Legal Issues



- Video in a public place is permitted.
- All camera deployments are in a location where an officer would be legally permitted.

Lessons Learned



Two cameras placed at different angles may work better than utilizing one, e.g., the fairgrounds.

Lessons Learned

- Portable models are effective. They are quickly and easily re-located by the department.
- Technical barriers :
 - Battery power only lasts 40 hours.
 - Poles can be used to temporarily hard-wire the camera system, but this could severely limit where the unit can be placed.

Strategic (fixed) Surveillance Cameras



- Time consuming and costly installation.
- Hard-wired and permanent.
- A higher quality camera with better resolution and low-light capability.

Strategic Surveillance Cameras

- The capabilities to zoom into an area up to a distance of 300 yards.
- Camera video can be monitored from any computer on the City network or from an officer's in-car mobile data computer.
- Camera video can be recorded to a secure server for storage.

Funding for Strategic Surveillance Cameras

- Strategic police camera grant funding for GPD was formally approved by the U.S. Department of Justice, COPS Office on September 26, 2008.
- This Grant, in the amount of \$117,000, is available until December 25, 2010.

Funding for Strategic Surveillance Cameras

- The grant is for fixed surveillance cameras with behavior analytics.
- Behavior analytics can result in a timely alert for police units to respond as situations develop; no waiting for a citizen to report a crime.

Issues:



- Will the mere presence of the police cameras create a perception of crime which is greater than it is in reality?
- What is the return on investment? Do the benefits justify the cost?

Issues:



- Will we create an expectation that the cameras will be monitored?
- Will we displace crime rather than reduce or prevent it?
- Freedom of Information Act requests.

Issues:



- Privacy concerns:
 - Video (and possibly audio) recording in a public place.

Other Communities That Have Benefited From the Deployment of Crime Cameras

- Larger cities like Baltimore, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia and the District of Columbia have had success with the use of police cameras.
- Many cities have expanded their original camera systems after achieving successful results.

- An August 3, 2007 article in the technology section of CNN.com advises the following:

“In 2005, Baltimore police had 500 units utilized, reducing crime as much as 17% in neighborhoods where cameras were located.”

- Major Dave Engel of the Baltimore Police Department has stated, “feedback from the community has been fantastic, and in fact, most people want cameras in their neighborhoods.”
- In a 2007 ABC News/Washington Post poll, the majority of Americans said that they support the increased use of surveillance cameras in public places, by nearly a 3 to 1 margin.



- Lancaster, Pennsylvania, population of 54,000 utilizes a camera system that is monitored 18 to 24 hours per day.

- Last year, civilian personnel in Lancaster monitored cameras, making notification for police service 492 times and providing video to the police department for investigations 305 times.

Results:

- 82 arrests and 86 citations.
- Police also arrested the suspect involved in a murder, where the suspect was captured on video.

Where would the City of Gaithersburg deploy cameras?

- Olde Towne
- Market Square
- Rio
- Schools
- Neighborhoods and/or business areas showing crime trends or patterns
- Traffic concerns involving repeat traffic violations

Where do we go from here?

- Purchase portable police cameras.
- Implement procedures for daily monitoring of cameras or reviewing of camera video.
- Training on camera use for employees.
- Press release for public awareness.
- Continued evaluation of the program.