

Members of the Malden City Council,

I am writing to provide a clear and factual overview of how Flock's Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR) technology works, the privacy and data protections in place, and its demonstrated impact on community safety. This information is intended to support your understanding ahead of any upcoming discussions, and it may also be shared with residents to ensure transparency.

How Flock ALPR Technology Works

Claim: ALPRs can track people and show police everywhere they go.

Fact: Flock ALPR cameras capture a *single, point-in-time* image of the rear of vehicles traveling on public roads. They do **not** track vehicles throughout their movements. Images not linked to an investigation are automatically deleted based on the retention schedule.

Claim: ALPR cameras collect personal information.

Fact: Flock ALPR does **not** collect Personally Identifiable Information (PII). It captures only images of vehicles, vehicle characteristics, and license plates—documents that are legally required to be visible on public roads. Flock has no access to names, addresses, DMV records, or any other PII.

Claim: Flock keeps ALPR data forever.

Fact: Data is permanently deleted according to local policy. The standard retention period is 30 days but can be adjusted by local law or agency policy.

Claim: Flock uses facial recognition.

Fact: Flock cameras cannot and do not use facial recognition. They cannot search for human characteristics such as race or gender.

Privacy, Data Ownership, and Access

Claim: License plates are private information.

Fact: License plates are government-issued identifiers and must be publicly visible as a condition of driving on public roads.

Claim: All Flock customer data is shared across the country.

Fact: Customers (police departments, HOAs, or businesses) control all sharing. Agencies may choose to share with:

- Individual partner agencies (1:1)
- A geographic radius (e.g., 10 miles)
- Statewide
- Nationwide

Sharing is always optional and controlled locally. The Malden Police Department limits it's use to Massachusetts law enforcement only.

Claim: Flock sells customer data or maintains a national database.

Fact: Flock does not sell data and does not maintain any national database. Customers own 100% of their data, decide who may access it, and all data is automatically deleted after the retention period.

Claim: Private customers can access law enforcement data.

Fact: Private customers cannot access law enforcement data. They may choose to share their own footage with police, but law enforcement data is never accessible to private entities.

Claim: Federal agencies have back-door access to Flock data.

Fact: There is no back-door access. Federal access is only possible if a local customer chooses to share data or grant access.

Constitutional and Legal Considerations

Claim: ALPRs violate the Fourth Amendment.

Fact: More than 30 appellate and federal courts have upheld the use of ALPR evidence. ALPRs capture information already legally visible in public and do not constitute a search under the Fourth Amendment.

Community Impact

Claim: ALPR cameras negatively impact Communities of Color.

Fact: The Oakland NAACP has publicly supported Flock ALPR, noting that the technology can **reduce bias** by focusing enforcement on vehicles linked to crime, rather than subjective decision-making during traffic stops.

Claim: ALPRs do not impact crime.

Fact: Cities across the country have documented measurable crime-reduction benefits from Flock ALPR systems:

- **San Diego:** 20% reduction in auto theft.
- **San Francisco:** 41% reduction in auto theft and a 46% increase in auto theft arrests.

These improvements stem from timely identification of vehicles connected to crimes, faster investigative leads, and reduced reliance on officer discretion.

Summary for Malden Residents

Flock ALPR technology is a **focused, point-in-time tool** that helps solve and reduce crime while protecting privacy through:

- **No tracking** of vehicle movement
- **No collection of personal data**
- **No facial recognition**
- **Local control of all data and sharing**
- **Automatic deletion** of data based on city policy

The goal is to enhance public safety, support constitutional policing, and reduce crime in a transparent, responsible way.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or if you would like additional information ahead of our next meeting.

Respectfully,
Glenn T. Cronin
Chief of Police