

Bellingham

POLICE

BELLINGHAM POLICE DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM

TO: Lt Rick Sucee
FROM: Sgt Ken Brown
SUBJECT: Report on ALPR
DATE: March 2, 2015

The new ALPR system came on line about one year ago on April 24, 2014. Due to technical problems with systems in the car and long "repair" times, the system was only used 19 days in the nine weeks it was here in the first half of the year. Officers were originally enthusiastic about it, but that declined because of all the technical problems.

The system continued to have problems throughout the second half of the year. I believe the issues were more from our MDC's than the ALPR system itself, but that still caused a lack of system usage.

I needed to be able to produce automated reports from the system server that would give me information needed for grant reporting to Olympia. So, I created several selectable disposition options in the user interface that would tell me the nature of ALPR Hits and what was done by the officer.

So far, nine patrol officers have been trained in the use of the system.

When it came time for me to prepare a Grant Report for the second half of 2014, the ALPR system and the server were down and I could not access the data needed to try and compile a meaningful report to WATPA, the grant provider. When I was later able to access the system, I was unable to find any data or generate reports any further back than December, 2014.

Today, I manually researched 86 LongArm Vehicle Recovery reports for the last half of 2014 and found that eight of those were stolen vehicle recoveries located via the ALPR system. No arrests made on those.

Other points of interest:

Apparently Washington state's stolen vehicle database from which we download the file for ALPR is not compatible with automated systems. Therefore, the ALPR database file we use has to be manually downloaded and plugged into our system. This means the alerts officers get can be several days stale (not current data) or more, depending on when somebody has the time to update the database. Christine Paulson can train others to do this so that the updates don't depend on her exclusively. Significantly stale data resulting in a felony stop on a vehicle that was actually recovered days earlier could present some liability issues.

We are currently out of policy in that users of the ALPR system are supposed to have their own login IDs. We currently use one common login. Since the system is already nested behind other secure system logins (Windows Network), we should be able to create simple individual user login IDs. This should keep us in policy and help me greatly in compiling data and addressing user issues I discover during data management and reporting.

We have found that the ALPR is alerting to hits on vehicles entered by Lynden PD where the vehicle is only associated with a subject with a misdemeanor warrant, yet the ALPR is alerting it as a Stolen Vehicle. I am currently working with the Records Bureau to figure out if Lynden PD is entering data wrong, or if WACIC or the ALPR system is not interpreting the data properly. This again can present some liability issues if an officer makes a felony stop on a vehicle that is erroneously alerted as stolen.

We have the ability to create our own local database for entering any vehicle we wish to track or be on the lookout for, such as serious felony suspects. I will be researching and working with Christine Paulson on this. I believe this capability is being looked at for Parking Ticket Scofflaws being entered into the RSVP ALPR system.

That is it for the time being. Feel free to forward this to others for their perusal before your meeting if you see fit.

Respectfully,

Sgt Ken Brown