

CHICO POLICE DEPARTMENT

Automated License Plate Reader Program Review

An internal review of program history,
administration, data sharing, and legal
considerations

ORIGINS OF THE REVIEW

Why this review

- A recent news article and subsequent coverage questioned C's its sharing of detection data outside California and with federal agencies.
- Chief Aldridge directed the Operations Captain, who administers the program, to conduct a review from start to end to end.
- No employee involved in the 2013 startup of the original program was involved in the review.
- The purpose is education, clarity, and transparency — a fact that will help shape the program's future.

SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

What this report isn't

- I was not assigned to conduct an internal affairs investigation
 - I was not assigned to conduct a forensic audit of every line of
 - I was not assigned to respond to allegations or critique of CPD
 - I was not assigned to independently resolve perceived issues
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CONTENTS

What the review covers

- 01 Program history and funding
 - 02 System scope and what is collected
 - 03 Data sharing and the July 8 decision
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 - 05 Policy history, auditing, and recommendations
-

01

Program history and

PROGRAM HISTORY

Three phases, 2013 to present

2013

Original program

Two patrol cars fitted with plate cameras, approved by Council 5–2 in September 2013 after an Internal Affairs Committee review. Equipment was funded by donations from a private community group. Phased out over the following decade. No mobile cameras are in use today by CPD.

2023

Phase 2

36 fixed Motorola L5F cameras at seven locations, funded initially by Camp Fire mitigation funds under Project #50439. Placement weighed points of entry to city, traffic volume, and crime concentration.

FUNDING

Approved allocations

ALLOCATION

Year-one installment and installation

Annual installment payment

Year-one installment and installation

Engineering and permits

Annual installment payment

Capital Project #50439 has expended **\$624,200.87** through August 31, 2026.

02

System scope and wh

SYSTEM OVERVIEW

The system today

46

Fixed cameras in service

10

Locations covered citywide

53

Cameras in Phase 3

All operations run through Motorola's Vehicle Manager 8.0, formerly brand permission-based and administered by the Operations Captain.

DETECTIONS AND RETENTION

Volume and retention

7,704,085

Veh
Aug

85,828,939

Detections from August 2025 through July 2026

≈80 million

Detections held in the database given time

WHAT IS COLLECTED

What a detection contains

Captured

- A still photograph of the vehicle
- License plate and state, where one is present and legible
- Possible make, color, and vehicle type
- Date, time, and location of the photograph

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03

Data sharing and the

HOW SHARING WORKS

Sharing is access, not transfer

Detection sharing

A permission for an allied agency to query CPD's database.

- CPD owns and separately stores every photograph its cameras capture and stores the image data in CPD's database.
- Data moves in either direction only when a query locates a response.
- Every query is logged as a search. A statewide query registers against all cameras and returns a matching record.
- Each relationship is established by an MOU setting terms of use between agencies.

Detection

A per

SHARING RELATIONSHIPS

Who could query Chico's database

BEFORE JULY 8, 2026

≈300

agencies allowed to query CPD's database

- More than 200 within California
- 88 in Oregon, Nevada, and Arizona
- 22 federal agencies, including ICE and Border Patrol

TODAY

10

agencies
California

- No
- No
- CPD

JULY 8, 2026

The decision to suspend outside

- A Lexipol policy revision in early 2026 added SB 34 language that practice.
- Staff reviewed SB 34 with the City Attorney's Office, along with the pending suit against the City of El Cajon.
- Chief Aldridge ended every sharing relationship that could be conducted out-of-state and 22 federal agencies, including ICE and Border Patrol.
- The decision did not alter the prior history of sharing, and it unintentionally transaction logs for former partner agencies.
- As of July 8, 2026, CPD is in compliance with SB 34.

POINT OF CLARIFICATION

CPD did not delete any data

How the logs work

- Archival transaction data is available upon request.
- The system does not continuously generate the transaction logs, and they are not saved or backed up.
- CPD generates an archival transaction log of internal users. Internal logs, once generated, are saved.

Why

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If we turn on access to an outside agency, that agency will have access to data if the sharing relationship is active.

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Law, policy, and over

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Four layers of Consideration

Constitutional

First and Fourth Amendment arguments are made on both sides, turning on whether aggregated public observation amounts to a search.

Federal

The 1996 immigration reform act is cited in favor of exchange with federal agencies under supremacy; opponents argue the field is not occupied.

California

SB 34 and
discuss
Attorney
2023-D
2025-D
advisory

Several ALPR lawsuits have been resolved in different ways, but no prev ALPR data.

POLICY HISTORY

Policy 449 becomes Policy 450

2023 · POLICY 449

Written with Lexipol, Motorola, the City Attorney's Office, and other California agencies. It set out a proximity-based sharing method covering bordering states and federal partners.

Legal advice at the time was that nothing expressly prohibited sharing outside California or with federal agencies.

2026 ·

Lexipol, Motorola, the City Attorney's Office, and other California agencies. It set out a proximity-based sharing method covering bordering states and federal partners.

Staff at the time was that nothing expressly prohibited sharing outside California or with federal agencies.

FORMER SHARING PARTNERS

Auditing agencies we no longer

Retrieval is impaired

- Ending a sharing relationship removed the link between CPD's account and the archival transaction logs for that agency.
- Work with Motorola has restored those agencies as audit options, but the function remains significantly limited.
- Logs come back in batches under 1,000 lines rather than the usual 100,000 — roughly 30 minutes of work to recover a single day, before redaction begins.
- Processing three years across 88 out-of-state and 22 federal agencies is not feasible manually.

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AUDITING

How use is audited

2023–2024

Audits of system function, settings, MOUs, and internal use twice a year, each documented in a written memorandum.

2025

Monthly review of user activity, ten searches per month selected random and traced to the correct report or call log.

No instance of misuse has been identified in any audit since the
Documentation of the audit process itself is where staff see room

RECOMMENDATIONS

Where the program stands

At the time of this report, CPD is in compliance with all regulations related to ALPR use.

RECOMMENDATION 01

Continue using the audit checklist, for consistency in the audit process and ease of transferring information to the public. Each audit to be summarized and properly redacted upon creation to streamline release.

RECOMMENDATION 02

Conduct a comprehensive review of Lexipol policy changes with the Attorney's Office. Produce and implement new policy.

QUICK REFERENCE

Quick Reference ALPR Stats: Keywords

12 cases	Warrant/Fugitive from Justice
41 cases	Stolen Vehicle Recoveries
2 cases	Weapons Violations
9 cases	Robbery, Grand Theft
5 cases	Shooting, Body Crimes, Domestic Violence

CASE OUTCOMES

ALPR successes

25-1001	Drive By shooting on Laurel St.	24-899
25-1392	Homicide City Lot 1	25-362
25-2191	Robbery of CHS Student: Vehicle Disc Only	25-803
26-2785	Stolen Firearms out of Las Vegas	25-583
25-5213	Burglary & Recovery of stolen AR15	24-623
25-2210	Kidnapping & Homicide: Vehicle Disc Only	24-794

CHICO POLICE DEPARTMENT

Questions?

Both the program review and the supplemental report are available in full.