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## **Smart Cities Virtual Gate Study**

### *Cities of Bunker Hill, Hunters Creek, & Piney Point Villages*

#### **Purpose of the Study**

To study specific technology that has the capacity to assist the Memorial Villages Police Department (MVPD) in crime prevention. The technology includes cameras with automated license plate readers (ALPR) and closed-circuit television/video (CCTV) surveillance that can be used in the investigation of criminal activity in the MVPD Villages. The study considers and explores the technical and engineering feasibility of implementing this technology. The technology has the capability of creating a "Virtual Gate" around the Villages.

#### **Project Summary**

Cameras have long been an effective crime-fighting tool and continue to be the focus of emerging technology for Public Safety Agencies across the nation including right here in the Memorial Villages Police Department. Cameras have successfully served as a deterrent and also as a forensic tool to solve crimes after they occur.

Continued interest from residents, neighborhood associations, and businesses to install cameras and/or expand the reach of their cameras has resulted in funding for a study to detail a network of similar crime prevention cameras along public roadways in the three cities. This project is call the "Virtual Gate Study."

The system with ALPR capability uses proven technology to address the unique needs for our area . Key elements to note include:

- There will be no active monitoring of the system unless an emergency situation dictates a need.
- Cameras are to be a passive system used to locate suspect vehicles after a crime occurs.
- The camera systems will include license plate recognition. License plate recognition cameras scan license plates and notify officers of stolen vehicles, amber alerts, and more.
- All camera locations identified in the study for use by the MVPD will be confined to public rights of way.
- All ALPR data will be stored for only 30 days and CCTV coverage will be retained for 24 hours except when used as evidence as part of a criminal investigation.
- The use of the system will be consistent with privacy laws, the constitutional rights of individuals, and the Texas Public Information Act.
- The cameras typically do not record facial images or the interior of vehicles.
- The system will have complete audit capabilities that identify who and when the system is accessed and include if any information has been copied, downloaded etc.

As the three Cities move forward with this Virtual Gate/ Crime Prevention Camera Study, public feedback is critical to address community concerns on the utilization of the cameras.



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### *Cities of Bunker Hill, Hunters Creek, & Piney Point Villages*

#### ***Mayors:***

Mark Kobelan, Piney Point Village  
Jim Pappas, Hunters Creek Village  
Jay Williams, Bunker Hill Village

#### ***City Hall Phone Numbers:***

713-782-0271  
713-465-2150  
713-467-9762

#### ***Tri-Cities Public Safety Committee:***

Chair Stuart Marks (HC)  
Vice Chair John Ebeling (PP)  
Brian Thompson (PP)  
Ken Spalding (HC)  
Jay Janecek (BH)  
Michelle Belco (BH)  
Jay Smyre (BH - Alternate)

#### ***Staff Members:***

Roger Nelson, City Admin (PP)  
Tom Fullen, City Admin (HC)  
Karen Glynn, City Admin (BH)  
Ray Schultz, MVPD Ast. Chief  
JD Sanders, MVPD Police Chief

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#### ***Engineering Consultant:***

Shrader Engineering -- Craig Shrader, Mike Lai, Mark Friday



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### **Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Camera Projects**

1. [How long has the ALPR system been around?](#)

This technology has been used by cities since its inception in the late 1990s. This technology is being used by several communities throughout the state of Texas. Each day, the state provides a download listing of stolen vehicles, stolen license plates and other vehicles wanted by law enforcement to departments who utilize ALPR technology. This allows for participating police departments to receive instant notification of wanted vehicles.

2. [Will the cameras monitor all streets within subdivisions?](#)

The Project will only focus on designated streets and intersections at entrances and exits throughout the MVPD Jurisdictional Area.

Partnerships will need to be developed in the future with homeowner associations, local businesses, and individuals that have their own camera system.

3. [Will the footage be publicly available?](#)

No. The Police Department and the Cities will follow applicable laws, including the Texas Public Information Act.

4. [How will the cameras be used?](#)

The system will be used as a passive investigative tool where data is stored and can later be searched for criminal leads after a crime occurs.

5. [Will the cameras be monitored?](#)

There will not be live monitoring. The system will be used as a passive investigative tool, storing data that can later be searched for criminal leads after a crime occurs.



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### Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Camera Projects

6. [Are other cities using cameras in this way?](#)

Many cities across the country use cameras for similar purposes. Some cities are using a combination of monitored video systems and passive license plate recognition systems.

7. [How will the Cities prevent misuse of the camera system?](#)

The Police Department will have policies and procedures in place that will govern the use, length of time camera data will be saved, and identify who will have access to camera data. These policies will be developed with the input from citizens and direction from the Mayors and City Councils. Both the MVPD Commission and Tri-Cities Public Safety Committee as well as our Mayors and City Councils are made up of residents living within the MVPD Jurisdictional Cities.

8. [Will the ALPR camera data \(images\) be shared with other agencies or the federal government?](#)

The camera data will not be shared with other agencies unless it is needed for a specific criminal investigation. Authorization from the Chief of Police will be required before camera data is shared with another agency.

9. [What specifically will the License Plate Recognition Cameras record?](#)

The ALPR cameras will be located on designated public streets throughout the Cities and aimed directly at the lane of traffic. The intent is to capture vehicle license plates. The ALPR cameras will not record private areas such as houses, backyards, or other private property. The cameras typically do not record facial images or the interior of vehicles.

10. [How long will the ALPR camera data be saved?](#)

The Police Department is recommending saving the camera data for 30 days and saving the closed-circuit television/video surveillance for 24 hours.