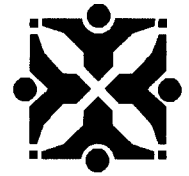


City of Columbia

701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201



Agenda Item Number: REP 59-15

Department Source: City Manager

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: 5/18/2015

Re: Downtown Safety Camera Use by Columbia Police Department

Documents Included With This Agenda Item

Council memo

Supporting documentation includes: Downtown Safety Camera Use

Executive Summary

At Councilperson Nausser's request this report describes the use of downtown safety cameras by the Columbia Police Department, provides information about the usefulness of the cameras for CPD, and provides a brief summary of the research literature concerning the effectiveness of CCTV cameras in regards to increasing public safety and decreasing criminal activity.

Discussion

Background and History of Downtown Safety Cameras

The Downtown Safety Cameras were the result of a grassroots campaign, Keep Columbia Safe, and successful initiative petition in 2009. Council placed the proposition on the April 2010 ballot where it passed with 58.88% approval. The use and area in which the cameras can be deployed (Central Business District) is described in Chapter 24 of the City Code. Cameras are not monitored 24/7 and are only monitored when there is a call for service from a location where a camera can see, when officers are responding to an incident in the camera's viewshed, or during targeted times and places when/where incidents frequently occur. Cameras have been added since the ballot's passage as a result of donations from Keep Columbia Safe. These new cameras have greater capabilities than many of the original cameras.

Use to Date

The attached table, *Downtown Safety Camera Use*, list incidents in which the Downtown Safety Cameras have been used. Surveillance cameras are also used outside of the Central Business District. Two cameras in Douglas Park were replaced with the same quality of camera used downtown. The installation of the cameras was part of a neighborhood discussion about increasing safety in the park. CPD also utilizes mobile surveillance cameras to aid with investigations and hot spots around the city.



Usefulness for CPD

The police department feels that cameras can work as a deterrent if people know where they are deployed and can provide useful evidence when they capture an incident. However, the current effectiveness of the cameras is hindered by their limited number and deployment. A larger and more dense system in a heavily used public area, such as downtown, would provide a better deterrent to criminal activity in that area as well as increase the probability that cameras could aid in surveillance, pursuits, and investigations.

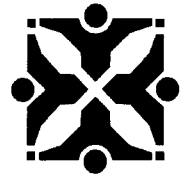
Summary of Research Literature

A review of academic meta-analysis and literature reviews about the effectiveness of public surveillance cameras at increasing public safety reveals a mixed bag of results. Most research was focused on Great Britain and systems in a few large American cities. Most studies concluded that CCTV can have a part in reducing criminal activity and aid in investigations of crimes in those areas when used in targeted hotspots, as active surveillance, and when cameras are part of a greater environmental design to reduce criminal activity (street lighting, increased pedestrian traffic, etc.) (Welsh, 2004; Welsh, 2003; Ratcliffe, 2009; Farrington, 2007; La Vigne, 2011; Shah Rajiv, 2013).

The Urban Institute (La Vigne, et. al., 2011) reviewed 3 surveillance systems in the US (Baltimore, Chicago, and Washington D.C.) for effectiveness with reducing crime and if the investment in the system had a positive cost/benefit ratio. They found that when actively monitored and deployed in the right areas CCTV systems can reduce crime and create a positive cost/benefit for the local jurisdiction. Interviewed policy makers and police also reported that camera footage was useful in the investigation of incidents. Ratcliffe, et. al. (2009) found a 13% drop in crime in all the areas where cameras were deployed in Philadelphia. There were some areas in the city where no change was found. Many studies found that CCTV surveillance is most effective in parking lots and transit systems. (Farrington, et. al., 2007). The success of CCTV surveillance is dependent upon a number of variables: their placement, view obstructions, the number and density of cameras, if they are actively monitored, and if people are aware of areas that are covered. Most research articles measured a small but significant effect at reducing crime and argued that these impacts justified the continued use of CCTV.

One argument against geographically targeted crime prevention methods that have been shown to have positive effects (including the use of CCTV) is that they displace crime to areas outside of the treatment. The reviewed studies have found no evidence of displacement and some argue that there is a diffusion of benefits from the treatments, that is, crime is also reduced in areas adjacent to the cctv monitored areas and the overall benefits of reduce crime from the treatments across the community (Guerette, 2009).

Like many studies that involve public policy these studies are limited by data availability, and the ability to conduct true experiments or even more robust quasi-experiments. Dr. Welsh of Northeastern University who has studied the effects of crime prevention strategies, and CCTV in particular, partially replicated an interesting meta-analysis used by Wiesburd, et. al. (2001) to examine the relationship



between research design and the strength of the outcome by examining studies of CCTV effectiveness Dr. Welsh, et. al. (2001) found the same results as Wiesburd, et. al. (2001) that studies with weaker research designs reported greater positive outcomes. These studies highlight the challenges and limitations imposed on researchers examining public policy and implementation, as opposed to research in the other fields like biology, chemistry, or medicine.

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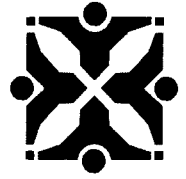
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Weisburd, David, Cynthia M. Lum, and Anthony Petrosino. "Does research design affect study

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Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: N/A

Long-Term Impact: N/A

Vision, Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

Vision Impact: Not Applicable

Strategic Plan Impact: Not Applicable

Comprehensive Plan Impact: Not Applicable

Suggested Council Action

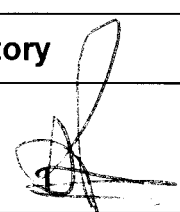
Informational

Legislative History

N/A



Department Approved



City Manager Approved



SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS INCLUDED WITH THIS AGENDA ITEM ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Catalog of Downtown Safety Camera Use by CPD



DOWNTOWN CAMERA USE

Case	Arrest	Description
2011-008799/1		Cameras observed DWI
2011-008799/2		Cameras observed DWI
2011-009985	Yes	Disturbance observed
2011-010299/1	Yes	Cameras witnessed liquor law violation and littering violation
2011-010384		Disturbance observed
2011-010765	Yes	Disturbance observed
2011-0010769/1		Cameras were used to monitor the location for a suspect of a disturbance with a knife
2011-010991		Suspect confessed because he thought the downtown camera recorded him
2011-011191/1		Located Suspect vehicle from a leaving the scene accident
2011-011822		Cameras observed DWI
2011-011822/1		Cameras observed DWI
2011-011822/2		Cameras observed DWI
2011-012311	Yes	Cameras witnessed littering violation and liquor law violation
2011-012311/1	Yes	Cameras witnessed littering violation and liquor law violation
2011-013122/1		Disturbance to handle a trespass subject who was intoxicated
2011-013164/1		Cameras provided a suspect description for larceny case
2011-014503/1		Caught physical disturbance on video
2011-014689		Witnessed Liquor Law Violation
2011-014689/1		Witnessed Liquor Law Violation
2011-014689/2		Witnessed Liquor Law Violation
2011-015009/83		Helped identify and recover victims property
2012-000551		Assault recorded by downtown cameras
2012-000708		Witnessed assault occur
2012-001507		Witnessed assault occur
2012-003419/2		Cameras used to determine suspect time and location, but did not actually observe assault
2012-004886		Helped recover victims property
2012-006022		Cameras show events prior to and flying debris during accident, but the accident occurred just off screen
2012-006554		Caught vandalism suspects on video
2012-006949		Witnessed victim get hit in the face and fall into the street
2012-006949/2		Witnessed assault occur
2012-007688/1		Witnessed disturbance but no details due to an unclear picture
2012-007818/1		Cameras observed physical disturbance
2012-007819/1		Witnessed disturbance take place
2012-007821		Caught man urinating on a vehicle and police were able to respond to location
2012-009801/1		Camera observed possible robbery suspect, but did not observe the actual robbery take place

