SURVEILLANCE TOOLKIT: LEGAL DEFINITIONS FOR COMMON SURVEILLANCE TECHNOLOGIES

The following definitions describe various common surveillance technologies. You can use these definitions as part of legislation (e.g., a surveillance technology ordinance or ban on a particular technology) and in your public records requests.

Automated license plate readers (ALPR)

"Automated license plate recognition system" or "ALPR system" means a searchable computerized database resulting from the operation of one or more mobile or fixed cameras, combined with computer algorithms to read and convert images of registration plates and the characters they contain into computer-readable data.

Body cameras

"Officer camera" means a body-worn camera or similar device that records or transmits images or sounds and is attached to the body or clothing of, or carried by, a law enforcement officer.

Cell site simulators (e.g., Stingrays)

"Cellular communications interception technology" means any device that intercepts mobile telephony calling information or content, including an international mobile subscriber identity catcher or other virtual base transceiver station that masquerades as a cellular station and logs information about a mobile device.

Drones, or unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs)

"Drone" or "Unmanned aerial vehicle" means an aircraft that is operated without the possibility of direct human intervention from within or on the aircraft.

Facial recognition

"Facial recognition technology" means an automated or semi-automated process that assists in identifying or verifying an individual, or captures information about them, based on the physical characteristics of an individual's face.

Predictive policing

"Predictive Policing Technology" means software that is used to predict information or trends about crime or criminality in the past or future, including but not limited to the characteristics or profile of any person(s) likely to commit a crime, the identity of any person(s) likely to commit crime, the locations or frequency of crime, or the person(s) impacted by predicted crime.

Location tracker

"Location tracker" is any device or service designed to seek or obtain location information. "Location information" means any information that helps to ascertain the location of an individual or particular electronic device that, in whole or in part, is generated or derived from the operation of an electronic device, including but not limited to a cell phone, smartphone, cell site, global positioning system, cell-site simulator, digital analyzer, stingray, triggerfish, amberjack,

kingfish loggerhead, or other electronic device, including both historical and real-time information.

Networked surveillance doorbell system

"Networked surveillance doorbell system" means any software that provides access to a network consisting of cameras or other recording devices mounted on private property and capable of monitoring, analyzing, or recording private property, the area around private property, and areas accessible to the public, including but not limited to public streets, sidewalks or common areas of public housing complexes.

Social media surveillance software

"Social media surveillance software" means any service or software that enables the monitoring, searching, collection, or analysis of user-generated content located on social media services. Examples of such social media services include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, Pinterest, Reddit, and SnapChat. "Social media surveillance software" does not include a mobile application or website operated by a social media service.

Radio frequency identification (RFID)

"Identification device" means any item, application, or product that is passively or actively capable of transmitting personal information, including, but not limited to, devices using radio frequency technology.

Video surveillance

"Video surveillance" means a digital recording surveillance system capable of monitoring, analyzing, or recording areas accessible to the public, including but not limited to, public streets, sidewalks or common areas of public housing complexes.