

SURVEILLANCE TOOLKIT: ONE-PAGER SUMMARY OF SURVEILLANCE TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNITY SAFETY ORDINANCE

FACT SHEET

Surveillance Technology & Community Safety Ordinance

(Councilmember _____)

The Problem

Modern surveillance technologies can collect sensitive information about our private lives without our knowledge or consent. Technologies such as drones, license plate readers, video cameras, and online monitoring software can easily be misused to discriminate, invade privacy, and chill First Amendment freedoms.

And surveillance technology is quickly growing more powerful - new face recognition surveillance systems give the government the unprecedented ability to automatically track who we are, where we go, and even our facial expressions.

The deployment of surveillance technology, which often occurs in secret, disproportionately harms immigrants, Muslim-Americans, political protesters, and the LGBTQ community, resulting in the collection of sensitive information about their lives that is ripe for misuse. Databases generated by these technologies are vulnerable to breach and other exploitation efforts, including by agencies like ICE.

Smart public safety decisions and the protection of all community members require that the City ensure public debate and community involvement in decisions about whether to acquire or use surveillance technology. Real public safety requires that residents have a voice in these decisions.

The Solution

The **Surveillance Technology & Community Safety Ordinance** ensures that residents and the local democratic process are in control of local surveillance decisions made in the City.

- The **Ordinance** creates a transparent process for considering surveillance technology proposals and gives local elected officials and residents a central role in decisions about whether to acquire or use it.
- The **Ordinance** ensures that there are strong rules to prevent misuse and harm for any surveillance technology acquired or used by City Departments.
- Finally, the **Ordinance** requires periodic assessments of surveillance technologies being used by the City to ensure that their costs – both to civil rights and to taxpayers – do not outweigh any potential benefits.

This Ordinance is based on a workable model: Seven California communities and thirteen localities nationwide have passed legislation of this type ensuring community members have a seat at the table for important decisions about surveillance