

Staff Report



Development Services Department

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REPORT TO: Community and Infrastructure Services Committee

DATE OF MEETING: April 20, 2026

SUBMITTED BY: Barry Cronkite, Director, Transportation Services, 519-783-8955

PREPARED BY: Barry Cronkite, Director, Transportation Services, 519-783-8955

WARD(S) INVOLVED: All

DATE OF REPORT: April 7, 2026

REPORT NO.: DSD-2026-167

SUBJECT: Waterloo Regional Police – Closed Circuit Television and Automatic License Plate Reader Program

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City of Kitchener support Waterloo Regional Police Service's proposed Closed-Circuit Television and Automatic License Plant Reader Program by way of an initial one-year pilot

That the Chief Administrative Officer be authorized to execute an agreement between the City of Kitchener and Waterloo Regional Police Services (WRPS) for the use municipal infrastructure to support WRPS' proposed Closed-Circuit Television and Automatic License Plate Reader Program, to the satisfaction of the City Solicitor; and further,

That staff report back after a period of one year from the start of the program to discuss the initial results of the CCTV/ALPR program in Kitchener to inform the consideration of an extension of the agreement.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

- The purpose of this report is to outline Waterloo Regional Police's proposed Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) and Automatic License Plate Readers (ALPR) Program in the City of Kitchener and seek authorization to enter into an agreement for the use of municipal infrastructure to support the program, with review after approximately one year from the start of the program.
- The key finding of this report is that the proposed CCTV/ALPR will enhance the overall safety and security of Kitchener Residents and providing a one-year check in allows Council to understand whether the program is meeting its stated objectives.
- The financial implications to the City of Kitchener as a result of the CCTV/ALPR program are expected to be negligible.

- Community engagement included virtual information sessions in Fall 2025 by WRPS to present the project and provide residents the opportunity to ask questions.
- This report supports the delivery of core services.

BACKGROUND:

In 2020 the Ministry of the Solicitor General of Ontario launched a new closed-circuit television (CCTV) grant program for Police Services. As a result, Waterloo Regional Police Services (WRPS) applied for and subsequently received provincial funding approval in March 2025, receiving \$100,000 to support their proposed CCTV program. WRPS has also matched the provincial funding provided, which has resulted in a total investment of \$200,000 anticipated in 2026.

In May 2025, WRPS delivered a presentation of the proposed Closed-Circuit Television/Automatic License Plate Reader (ALPR) program to city staff and requested that the City of Kitchener partner with WRPS by both supporting the program within the City of Kitchener and providing access to any municipal infrastructure necessary to install closed circuit surveillance equipment. At that time, staff raised questions regarding logistics, timing, funding, communications, and privacy considerations.

REPORT:

CCTV is a video surveillance system that uses cameras to transmit footage to a restricted set of monitors accessible to authorized viewers only, typically police/enforcement/security services. It is widely considered a core tool for security and monitoring.

ALPRs are camera-based systems that automatically capture and analyze vehicle license plates. They typically combine cameras with software to identify plate numbers, record the time and location, and compare them against databases.

The proposed CCTV/ALPR system consists of a combination of different cameras that would be deployed in areas such as those with high pedestrian traffic, downtown core areas, major traffic intersections and regional ingress/egress routes. Cameras would be housed and powered on existing traffic signal/streetlight poles/infrastructure and passively monitored by WRPS Real-Time Operations Centre; they would not be accessible by all members of WRPS.

According to WRPS, the project concept would:

- Support WRPS' crime suppressions strategy
- Decrease violent crimes
- Decrease social disorder occurrences
- Support front-line operations
- Improve investigative outcomes
- Increase video camera capacity and access
- Increase public safety

It is expected that CCTV/ALPR would serve as an additional investigative tool, provide quality evidence, deter criminal behaviour, and search for license plates that are of criminal interest. The cameras are not intended for speed enforcement and would not be live monitored by officers.

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)

Under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA), institutions (municipalities and police services) are legally required to ensure that the collection of personal information is authorized (Section 28(2)), that individuals are notified of such collection (Section 29(2)), and that personal information is managed in accordance with established privacy standards. Municipalities must balance the operational benefits of surveillance with their duty to protect individual privacy rights through transparency, secure storage, and responsible use and disclosure.

In August 2025, WRPS provided a draft agreement for their proposed CCTV/ALPR program to City staff. The proposed document was reviewed and questions regarding installation, control and access were raised. City Staff are satisfied that WRPS has addressed privacy impact concerns and they meet the legal requirements outlined in MFIPPA.

Proposed Use of City Infrastructure

In order to install the CCTV/ALPR program hardware, WRPS may need to use municipal streetlight infrastructure. WRPS has indicated that they would work with municipal staff/Council to ensure CCTV cameras are placed to minimize any concerns and limit negative impact. To ensure that any future municipal concerns are addressed, a legal agreement should be executed between WRPS and the City of Kitchener related to CCTV/ALPR devices on city infrastructure and on City lands.

Outstanding Program Concerns

As previously indicated in this report, staff are satisfied with privacy controls provided by WRPS. Further, it is worth noting that significant effort has been invested by the Business Improvement Area, Waterloo Region Police, the Region of Waterloo and the City of Kitchener in the past year, specifically in the downtown area, to enhance safety & security.

However, it is also worth noting that there are a series of concerns that remain unknown/unaddressed:

- The agreement does not address electrical consumption and the costs associated if installed on municipal infrastructure.
- It is unknown if the program will be widely accepted/appreciated in the community
- The program is only intended to include two sites in Kitchener initially, but the timeline for growth and scale of the program is not yet known by staff.
- WRPS has indicated that it will indemnify the City of Kitchener related to the installation and use of the cameras, but concerns remain regarding any potential future legal action.

To address the concerns above, staff will continue to work with WRPS. Further, rather than an automatic renewal of the legal agreement, staff recommend that a report be brought forward approximately one year after initiation of the program to review the legal agreement, report on available outcome measures, and determine if the City of Kitchener should continue in support of CCTV/ALPR. Staff will seek council direction at the one year mark with respect to extending the program.

Should significant concerns arise prior to a follow up review, the legal agreement states that "Either of the Parties may terminate this Agreement for any reason upon written notice to

the other with at least thirty (30) days notice. The Party receiving notice of termination may waive the notice period.”

Next Steps

In summary, staff recommend supporting the use of CCTV/ALPR to enhance public safety. Further, staff recommend entering into a legal agreement with WRPS for their use of a CCTV/ALPR within the City of Kitchener and/or on city infrastructure. It is anticipated that CCTV/ALPR will be an additional investigative tool, provide quality evidence, deter criminal behaviour, and search for license plates that are of criminal interest. It is understood that the cameras are not intended for speed enforcement nor will they be used for facial recognition or live monitored by officers.

WRPS has indicated, should Council be supportive of the program, that it will begin work to launch 2 sites in the City of Kitchener. Once launched, staff will report back to Council appropriately one year following the launch of the program, reporting on qualitative and quantitative to both measure success and approval/acceptance in the City of Kitchener.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This report supports the delivery of core services.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Capital Budget – The recommendation has no impact on the Capital Budget, as WRPS have obtained a grant and fully funded the program.

Operating Budget – The recommendation has minimal impact on the Operating Budget. Should placement of equipment be required on municipal infrastructure, there may be minor costs associated with electrical consumption to power the equipment. If any operating costs are identified within the first year of the program, they will be included within a subsequent Memorandum of Understanding.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

INFORM – This report has been posted to the City’s website with the agenda in advance of the council / committee meeting.

CONSULT – WRPS hosted public virtual information sessions in Fall 2025 to present the project and provide residents the opportunity to ask questions. WRPS has also committed to media releases and social media posts to inform the community prior to the cameras being energized. WRPS is also committed to informing the public about the use of CCTV and ALPR with regular reporting to the WRPS Police Services Board.

Camera locations will be published on the WRPS website, and signage will be present at all camera locations to indicate the use of CCTV. Information will be updated should cameras be added or moved.

PREVIOUS REPORTS/AUTHORITIES:

There are no previous reports/authorities related to this matter.

APPROVED BY: Justin Readman, General Manager Development Services