

From: [debra marsteller](#)
To: [CITY CLERK](#)
Subject: Moon Park Survey
Date: Tuesday, July 21, 2026 11:53:29 AM

Dear council members, first off, thank you so much for taking the time to listen to our community and for your work on our behalf. There are so many pressing problems so I ask forgiveness for complaining. The survey that came out for the park on California and the Nevada streets in Mesa Verde limits our choices. This is a very manipulative way to get input. There at no time was an option for none of the above. We do not need fencing we do not need more lighting. We do not need more development. We could use some more trees. And independent analysis of the parks in Costa Mesa indicated that Moon Park was low on the list but now it seems there's a lot of money behind a complete overhaul. We do not want it or need it. Just around the corner is a little park called suburbia Park. That's fully fenced with absolutely no development. Put the toddler lots over there. Leave Moon Park so that bikers and runners can have water stations. Leave the Moon. It's quirky and it's weird but it's ours. We don't need to change Moon Park. I just want add more trees. I'm disinclined to share the QR code for the survey because it forces answers. Can you share the budget? That also wasn't discussed

Debbie Marsteller

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From: [James Peters](#)
To: [CITY CLERK](#)
Subject: Public Comments - Self-Service Checkout (Ordinance No. 2026-02)
Date: Monday, July 20, 2026 1:51:38 PM

City Clerk,

I have been a Costa Mesa resident for over 25 years. I am writing to express serious concerns about the Self-Service Checkout Staffing Requirements Ordinance and its potential unintended consequences for local retailers, shoppers, and the City's sales tax revenue.

While I understand the goals of reducing theft and supporting store employees, the strict staffing ratios (1 employee per 3 self-checkout stations), requirement for a dedicated attendant, and other restrictions appear to be prompting retailers to dramatically scale back or eliminate self-checkout options. Early indications suggest stores like CVS have removed self-checkout entirely, while others such as Sprouts have cut their self-checkout lanes roughly in half.

This has resulted in significantly longer checkout times for customers like myself, especially during peak hours. Many residents already face time constraints with work, family, and daily errands. A much slower checkout process has frustrated my family and other shoppers. This strongly incentivize all of us to drive to surrounding cities (such as Huntington Beach, Newport Beach, or Irvine) where self-checkout remains more readily available and convenient.

In the long run, this shift in shopping behavior could substantially reduce foot traffic and sales at Costa Mesa retail locations. As a result, the City may see a noticeable decline in local sales tax revenues—the very funds that support public services, infrastructure, and community programs. This would be counterproductive to the City's economic goals.

I respectfully urge the Council to closely monitor the real-world impacts of the ordinance during the 2027 review period. I recommend considering amendments that provide more flexibility for retailers while still addressing legitimate concerns about theft and staffing. Protecting both workers and a convenient shopping experience is essential to keeping Costa Mesa a vibrant and competitive place to live and do business.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important local issue. I would appreciate any updates on planned monitoring or adjustments to the ordinance.

James Peters ツ

From: [Fatima](#)
To: [CITY CLERK](#)
Subject: Vote no to approving Flock
Date: Tuesday, July 21, 2026 11:59:40 AM

Dear City Council,

I write as a concerned OC resident to oppose the continuation of the Flock ALPR program. These cameras introduce surveillance, not safety to our streets

Best,
Fatima Charara

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RESILIENCE ORANGE COUNTY
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Subject: Public Comment — Flock Safety ALPR System

Dear Mayor Stephens and Members of the Costa Mesa City Council,

I am writing on behalf of myself and Resilience Orange County to urge the City Council not to continue Costa Mesa's contract with Flock Safety.

I grew up in Costa Mesa and have spent over a decade organizing alongside immigrant families throughout Orange County. At a time when our communities are facing immigration enforcement that has become increasingly aggressive, militarized and deadly, the city should not expand an infrastructure capable of tracking our neighbors every movement.

Our concern is not limited to whether the Costa Mesa Police Department currently intends to use Flock cameras for immigration enforcement. The larger concern is the surveillance and information sharing infrastructure that Costa Mesa is helping build. Automated license plate readers create searchable records of where people travel, work, worship, organize, get services, and call home. Once that information enters an interconnected law enforcement network, the city cannot fully control how it may later be accessed, shared, or repurposed.

ICE and the Department of Homeland Security do not need direct access to every local database. They can request that another law enforcement agency conduct a search, obtain information through task forces or regional partnerships, purchase data from private companies, or combine records from multiple systems. We should expect federal immigration agencies to continue finding ways around local restrictions when those restrictions interfere with their enforcement goals.

Mijente¹ launched a report *The Tech Behind ICE*² that documents how license plate readers, data brokers, facial recognition, social media monitoring, cellphone tracking, and other technologies are being combined to identify, locate, and target immigrants. It also warns that infrastructure built to target immigrants can be used against protesters, journalists, legal observers, and people documenting government activity.

Nearly a decade ago UC Irvine School of Law Immigrant Rights Clinic's *Mislabeled*³ report, which documented how information collected by local law enforcement, often based on subjective allegations and with little due process, was entered into networked databases accessible to ICE and

¹ Mijente is a digital and grassroots hub for Latinx and Chicanx movement-building and organizing. [<https://mijente.net/>]

² The Tech Behind ICE: Oligarchs, Immigration Enforcement, and the Threat to Democracy
[<https://notechforice.com/tech-behind-ice/>]

³ [<https://www.law.uci.edu/academics/real-life-learning/clinics/ucilaw-irc-MislabeledReport.pdf>]



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DHS. Local officials and officers were not always aware that information collected for one purpose could later affect immigration detention, deportation priorities, or eligibility for legal relief.

Flock and gang databases are different systems, but the lesson is the same: information does not always remain limited to its original purpose. A policy against direct sharing is important, but it does not eliminate indirect requests, misuse, vendor failures, changing political leadership, or future changes to access rules.

We applaud the steps that Costa Mesa has taken to support immigrant residents, but the city should not support immigrant families with one hand while maintaining a surveillance system that could help federal agencies target those same residents with the other.

License plate readers may assist in some investigations, but these limited benefits do not justify a system of continuous, suspicionless tracking. Public safety cannot come at the expense of civil rights and immigrant safety. Residents should not have to wonder whether paying an electric bill, shopping for school supplies, dropping their children off at school or practice, going to a food distribution, buying groceries, going to work, or attending a community meeting could create a searchable record of their movements.

We urge the Council to reject the Flock Safety contract, prohibit City personnel from conducting ALPR searches for ICE, DHS, or any agency or intermediary acting on their behalf, and require meaningful public review and oversight before Costa Mesa acquires or renews any surveillance technology.

Written policies and assurances of responsible use cannot eliminate the risks created by this infrastructure. Flock data can be accessed indirectly, combined with other records, expanded through new partnerships, or repurposed under different leadership. Maintaining this system creates an avoidable path for immigrant families and other community members to be located and targeted. Costa Mesa should not wait for a policy failure, another unauthorized search, or family separation to prove that these dangers are real. The city should act now and end the contract.

In Community,

Oswaldo Farias

Deputy Director

Resilience Orange County

From: [Maggie Magana](#)
To: [CITY CLERK](#)
Subject: Public Comment Regarding Flock Cameras
Date: Tuesday, July 21, 2026 10:33:12 AM

Good morning,

I regularly commute to Costa Mesa to shop at some local businesses, at South Coast Plaza, and to attend movies at Triangle Square and live performances at Segerstrom Center. This is typically a weekly, if not more than weekly, occurrence. If Flock surveillance is installed in Costa Mesa, I will shift my patronage to a different city. I will also inform my family and friends and encourage them to go elsewhere. We are respectable and law abiding people, but we also expect to be respected, and having our private information entered into a private database without cause or a warrant is simply unacceptable.

Thank you for your time,
- Maggie Magaña

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From: [dineka.ringling](#)
To: [CITY CLERK](#)
Subject: Public Comment Regarding Flock ALPR Cameras
Date: Tuesday, July 21, 2026 10:43:59 AM

Dear Mayor and Council Members,

My name is Dineka Ringling, and I am a Costa Mesa resident. I am writing to urge you to end the City's contract with Flock Safety and reject the expansion of automated license plate reader surveillance in our community.

I do not believe Costa Mesa should normalize mass surveillance in the name of public safety. These cameras collect information on the movements of everyone who drives through our city, regardless of whether they are suspected of a crime. Innocent people should not have their daily movements recorded and stored simply because they are commuting to work, taking their children to school, visiting friends, or running errands.

Once surveillance infrastructure is put in place, it is difficult to limit how it is used over time. Data can be retained, shared, and accessed in ways that extend far beyond its original purpose. I do not want Costa Mesa to become a city where everyone is treated as though they are under constant observation.

Privacy is a fundamental right, not something we should have to give up for the promise of increased security. I urge you to reject this contract and instead invest in public safety measures that do not require the routine collection of data on law-abiding residents and visitors.

Please vote to remove Flock from Costa Mesa.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dineka Ringling
Costa Mesa Resident

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From: [Zoe](#)
To: [CITY CLERK](#)
Subject: Public Comment – July 21, 2026 City Council Meeting – Item [26-315]
Date: Friday, July 17, 2026 5:20:13 PM

Hello,
Below I've written my public comment I will be sharing at the city council meeting this Tuesday:

Dear Mayor Stevens and the Costa Mesa City Council,

I have been a Costa Mesa resident for nearly a year. I love it here, I care about this city, and as a concerned citizen, I am urging you to vote against renewing the City's contract with Flock Safety.

I understand why some believe the cameras are a net positive, offering resources to the police department and helping reduce crime. I appreciate the difficulty of balancing public safety with civil liberties. However, I believe Flock ALPR cameras ask residents to give up too much privacy without informed consent.

There are aspects of the staff report that deeply concern me. A Costa Mesa police officer used Flock cameras and other databases to stalk his ex-partner and his own wife. He pleaded guilty to unauthorized use of surveillance technology after prosecutors found his use was tied to personal reasons, not legitimate police work. This illustrates that Flock technology can be abused by those trusted to use it responsibly.

Additionally, Flock has a history of privacy sharing failures that have affected cities across California. Data leaks are not hypothetical; they have already happened.

These cameras don't just capture criminals. They are constantly scanning, recording, and storing the information of everyday Costa Mesa residents. While reducing crime is important, the number of arrests does not prove that ALPR cameras are necessary. The fact that Flock cameras were involved in an investigation does not demonstrate that those arrests could not have happened without them.

We all expect our personal movements not to be tracked by default. ALPR cameras create the possibility that our everyday movements can be monitored, including where we worship, seek medical care, attend political events, or visit family.

The use of intense surveillance technology changes the relationship and trust between citizens and their government. I urge the mayor and city council to consider whether this technology is helping build the city we want.

Public safety should not come at the expense of our civil liberties.

Please vote against renewing the Flock contract. Thank you.

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From: [Ben Hubbard](#)
To: [CITY CLERK](#)
Subject: Please read into the meeting record
Date: Tuesday, July 14, 2026 12:00:19 PM

Greetings,

My name is Ben Hubbard, and I am a resident of Costa Mesa.

I am writing to urge you to reject, prohibit, or place a moratorium on the installation or expansion of automated license plate reader systems, including Flock Safety, in our community of Costa Mesa.

These systems are often presented as simple crime-fighting tools, but they create a form of mass surveillance that records the movements of ordinary people who are not suspected of any crime. That raises serious concerns about privacy, civil liberties, and the long-term misuse of sensitive location data.

Even when these systems are marketed as narrowly targeted, the reality is that they can enable broad tracking, data retention, inter-agency sharing, and mission creep over time. A system installed for one purpose today can easily be expanded tomorrow. Once the infrastructure is in place, the temptation to widen its use becomes very difficult to control.

I am also concerned about:

- collection of data on innocent residents and visitors
- mistakes, false matches, and wrongful stops
- data sharing with outside agencies
- cybersecurity and breach risks
- lack of meaningful public oversight
- unclear retention, audit, and access rules
- the creation of a permanent record of people's movements

If the city is considering this technology, I ask that you not move forward unless and until there has been a full public process, including public notice, a public hearing, a clear written use policy, strict retention limits, access logs, independent audits, transparency reporting, and meaningful limits on sharing.

But my preference is simpler: do not install this system at all.

Public safety should not come at the cost of building a system that tracks everyone first and asks questions later. Costa Mesa should invest in safety strategies that are effective without creating a surveillance network over daily life.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Ben Hubbard, PhD, CPA

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From: [Elysia Soria](#)
To: [CITY CLERK](#)
Subject: Please read into the meeting record. REJECT FLOCK CAMERAS
Date: Tuesday, July 14, 2026 12:06:30 PM

Greetings,

My name is Elysia Soria, and I am a resident of Costa Mesa. I am writing to strongly urge you to reject, prohibit, or place a moratorium on the installation or expansion of automated license plate reader systems, including Flock Safety, in our community of Costa Mesa.

These systems are often presented as simple crime-fighting tools, but they instead create a form of mass surveillance that records the movements of ordinary people who are not suspected of any crime. That raises serious concerns about privacy, civil liberties, and the long-term misuse of sensitive location data.

Even when these systems are marketed as "narrowly targeted," the reality is that they can enable broad tracking, data retention, inter-agency sharing, and mission creep over time. A system installed for one purpose today can easily be expanded tomorrow. Once the infrastructure is in place, the likelihood of widening its use becomes near impossible to control.

These mass surveillance systems have been widely confirmed by organizations and agencies throughout the United States, including the ACLU, as unsafe to communities, as evidenced by:

- collection of data on innocent residents and visitors
- mistakes, false matches, and wrongful stops
- data sharing with outside agencies
- cybersecurity and breach risks
- lack of meaningful public oversight
- unclear retention, audit, and access rules
- the creation of a permanent record of people's movements

If the city is considering this technology, I ask that you DO NOT move forward unless and until there has been a full public process, including public notice, a public hearing, a clear written use policy, strict retention limits, access logs, independent audits, transparency reporting, and meaningful limits on sharing.

However, most importantly, my preference is simpler: do not install this system at all. Public safety should not come at the cost of building a system that tracks everyone first and only asks questions later. Costa Mesa should instead invest in safety strategies that are effective without creating a mass surveillance network over daily life.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Elysia of Costa Mesa

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From: [Amy in Mission Viejo](#)
To: [STEPHENS, JOHN](#); [CHAVEZ, MANUEL](#); [MARR, ANDREA](#); [BULEY, MIKE](#); [GAMEROS, LOREN](#); [PETTIS, JEFF](#); [REYNOLDS, ARLIS](#); [CITY COUNCIL](#); [CONSTITUENT SERVICES](#); [CITY CLERK](#)
Subject: Please Direct Staff to Invoke the Termination Clause and End the Flock Contract — Tonight's Agenda, File #26-315
Date: Tuesday, July 21, 2026 11:06:21 AM

Dear Mayor and Members of the Costa Mesa City Council,

My name is Amy Stevens. I don't live in Costa Mesa, but I'm here regularly: I volunteer in this city, I spend my tax dollars here at IKEA, South Coast Plaza, and Triangle Square, I visit friends here often, and I drive through Costa Mesa regularly commuting between OC communities. I'm writing about tonight's staff report on the Flock Safety ALPR program (File #26-315) as an independent Orange County resident, because I think it's one of the clearest non-partisan issues in front of you this year, and because I've spent real time verifying what's below before sending it to you.

THIS ISN'T A LEFT-RIGHT ISSUE

Whether you're driving to protest ICE or to a Second Amendment rally, to a memorial for Charlie Kirk or to Eid prayers at a mosque, to a union hall meeting or a church potluck, every one of those trips through Costa Mesa gets logged by this system the exact same way, and none of us gets to choose in advance whose data ends up flagged, shared, or searched later by someone we'll never meet, for a reason we'll never know. This isn't hypothetical: an Electronic Frontier Foundation review found that a significant number of police departments nationwide have searched Flock's camera network in connection with protest activity. When Flock's own CEO recently accused people raising these concerns of trying to weaken policing and enable lawlessness, the police chief in Staunton, Virginia wrote back to disagree, calling residents' efforts to get answers simply "democracy in action." Staunton ended its Flock contract days later. This is a credibility problem with a vendor, not an attack on policing, and it reads the same whichever side of the aisle you're on.

CMPD HAS ALREADY DONE THE THING THE WEBSITE SAYS IT DOESN'T DO
CMPD's own ALPR page states our system "will never be utilized for immigration enforcement or purposes not specific to enforcement of California laws." A slide presented at the June 16 council meeting, compiled from other agencies' Flock network audits, showed CMPD conducting searches in which officers had typed the names of outside agencies, including ATF and Homeland Security Investigations, directly into the system's "reason" field. The assumption is that a search reason naming a federal agency means the search was conducted on that agency's behalf, though the underlying data only confirms CMPD made the search and named the agency in the reason box, not the officer's actual intent. Since that meeting, further review of audit data has surfaced additional CMPD searches logged with DHS's Stonegarden program, an immigration- and border-security-linked initiative, named in the reason field as well. Whatever the full picture turns out to be, this is not a hypothetical about what some other city's officers might do. This is Costa Mesa's own logged activity.

And separately, a Costa Mesa officer used CMPD's own Flock cameras and CLETS access to track his mistress, her romantic partners, and his own wife, continuing even after he'd been placed on administrative leave. His database queries began in June 2023. He wasn't arrested until June 2024, after violating a restraining order. He didn't plead guilty until April 2026, to unauthorized computer access, harassment, and violating a restraining order, nearly three years after the misuse began. This wasn't a single lapse in judgment against one person; it was

sustained, repeated misuse across multiple targets. If CMPD points to this case tonight as an example of the system catching its own, I'd ask the Council to weigh that three-year timeline against any claim that oversight here is fast or reliable. The department's audit protocols didn't stop either case in real time. Both only mattered after the harm was already done.

NEITHER THE COMPANY NOR THE CONTRACT WILL ACTUALLY GUARANTEE WHAT WE'RE BEING PROMISED

I read the underlying Flock agreement the City signed. Section 4.1 lets Flock disclose our data to law enforcement, government officials, or third parties whenever the company has a "good faith belief" it's needed for a list of broad reasons, including protecting "the rights, property or safety of Flock, its users, a third party, or the public." That is close to word-for-word the clause Hillsborough, North Carolina cited when it ended its Flock contract, alarmed that the language let Flock disclose data to any government entity based on the company's own judgment. Separately, Section 2.11 lets Flock change its platform and software "in its sole discretion" at any time, no City approval required. That matters because Flock's own 2022 patent (US11416545B1, filed by CEO Garrett Langley himself) describes technology that classifies people captured on camera by race, gender, height, weight, and clothing, and can match footage to a person by facial recognition data points, flatly contradicting the "we don't detect race, gender, or facial recognition" language on both CMPD's site and Flock's transparency portal. I'm not claiming Costa Mesa's cameras run that feature today. I am saying the company holds the capability, has sole discretion to activate it, and has already misrepresented its capabilities to at least one other city (Oshkosh, WI rescinded its Flock renewal within 24 hours in April 2026 after the police chief caught a Flock rep denying the system could generate location "heat maps" that he had personally seen it generate). Finally, Flock is currently facing a class-action lawsuit in San Francisco Superior Court alleging it let out-of-state and federal agencies search California drivers' data over a million times without authorization, and Berkeley's own city attorneys warned their council in a memo that the city cannot ensure Flock will abide by its contractual obligations. If professional city attorneys elsewhere can't get comfortable with this, I don't think "trust us" is a sufficient answer for Costa Mesa.

THERE IS NO INDEPENDENT EVIDENCE THIS ACTUALLY WORKS

Tonight's staff report states this item supports the Council's goal to "strengthen the public's safety and improve the quality of life." But a camera doesn't stop a crime from happening. It takes a picture of a car that has already driven past. At best, it hands investigators a lead after the fact. That's a real function, but it isn't prevention, and it isn't the same thing as public safety. The felony-arrest and recovery numbers come from Flock's own self-reported "Impact Census" survey of its paying customers, not an independent study. The most comprehensive peer-reviewed review of ALPR research, published in the Cambridge Journal of Evidence-Based Policing, concluded the jury is still out on whether ALPRs are more effective in achieving public safety goals, noting most studies measure how fast officers can check a plate rather than whether crime actually goes down. A separate analysis by the Independent Institute, a libertarian-leaning think tank, found no statistical correlation between ALPR hits and stolen vehicle recoveries after reviewing sixteen years of data from a heavy ALPR-use city. Even Flock's own contract limits its liability, in writing, for "crime prevention" and for "repeat criminal activity." The company that sold us this system will not put its own money behind the claim that it prevents crime, and if it doesn't, this item doesn't actually support the goal it's being filed under.

THE EXIT IS ALREADY IN THE CONTRACT, AND IT'S CHEAP

Section 6.2 of the agreement the City signed, "Termination for Convenience," allows the City to end this agreement at any time, for any reason, for a one-time fee of \$500 per camera. For all 46 units, that's \$23,000, a fraction of the \$151,800 we're paying this year alone to keep the program running.

MY ASK

1. Direct staff to invoke Section 6.2 of the Flock agreement and terminate for convenience.
2. If the Council isn't ready to act tonight, at minimum commission a full, independent, public audit of every Costa Mesa search conducted on behalf of ATF, HSI, DHS Stonegarden, or any other federal or out-of-state agency, going back to the start of the contract, and ask for evidence that Flock and similar systems actually reduce crime and increase safety based on an independent, peer-reviewed study.
3. Whatever the outcome, ask staff to report back on what \$151,800 a year could fund in terms of real public safety and quality of life directly for Costa Mesa residents instead.

Thank you for your time and for the work you put into representing this city. I'd welcome the chance to answer questions or speak further before you vote.

Respectfully,
Amy Stevens

Sources referenced above:

- Costa Mesa PD staff report, File #26-315 (7/21/2026):
<https://costamesa.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=8138783&GUID=A0DCB12E-046C-439C-91DA-6D34EA420AE9&Options=&Search=&FullText=1>
- Flock Safety Flowdown Government Agency Agreement with City of Costa Mesa:
<https://www.costamesaca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/51506/63879613606817000>
- U.S. Patent US11416545B1 (Flock Group Inc., inventors Garrett Langley and Matt Feury):
<https://patents.google.com/patent/US11416545B1/en>
- KQED, "Santa Cruz the First in California to Terminate Its Contract With Flock Safety":
<https://www.kqed.org/news/12069705/santa-cruz-the-first-in-california-to-terminate-its-contract-with-flock-safety>
- NPR, "Why some cities are ditching their Flock license plate readers":
<https://www.npr.org/2026/02/17/nx-s1-5612825/flock-contracts-canceled-immigration-surveillance-concerns>
- CBS News Los Angeles, "Ex-Costa Mesa police officer accused of using FLOCK cameras to track his mistress": <https://www.cbsnews.com/losangeles/news/ex-costa-mesa-police-officer-accused-of-using-flock-cameras-to-track-his-mistress/>
- Courthouse News, "California drivers accuse Flock Safety of sharing data with federal and out-of-state agencies": <https://www.courthousenews.com/california-drivers-accuse-flock-safety-of-sharing-data-with-federal-and-out-of-state-agencies/>
- WBAY, "Oshkosh council rescinds Flock camera contract after 'false statements'":
<https://www.wbay.com/2026/04/23/oshkosh-council-rescinds-flock-camera-contract-after-false-statements/>
- Cambridge Journal of Evidence-Based Policing, "Measuring the Cost-Effectiveness of New Technologies in Policing: The Case of ALPR":
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s41887-025-00099-y>
- Independent Institute, "Automated License Plate Readers: A Study in Failure":
<https://www.independent.org/article/2021/11/30/automated-license-plate-readers-a-study-in->

[failure/](#)

- Berkeleyside, "What are Flock cameras, and why are they controversial in Berkeley?":

<https://www.berkeleyside.org/2026/07/13/flock-safety-cameras-berkeley-license-plate-readers>

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From: [Priscilla Rocco](#)
To: [CITY CLERK](#)
Subject: NO FLOCK IN COSTA MESA
Date: Tuesday, July 21, 2026 9:33:29 AM

I used to document mainframe computer systems, alongside highly-trained engineers who worked round-the-clock to protect the privacy of the data. Yet, my personal data has been breached multiple times. The affected company often provides free credit services as some recompense, so I can check that my data isn't used to bankrupt me.

FLOCK Safety's business model is the polar opposite. FLOCK is NOT a license plate reader, it's an indiscriminate surveillance system. And its goal is not data safety, but national data weaponization for Trump, ICE, and MAGA to maim, kill, or jail their enemies. Full stop!

If you think this is hyperbole, you haven't been paying attention.

Every day rogue cops and ICE use FLOCK data to attack their enemies: to stalk women in their lives, or those seeking reproductive healthcare; immigrants going to court hearings or dropping off their kids; protesters fighting for Democracy; and minorities driving and living while NOT WHITE.

Hard to believe, but people in this country still have a legal right to protest without being shot; and an Immigration infraction is only a misdemeanor not an execution order. Yet Trump has funded and built ICE; an unvetted, untrained, masked and anonymous group of child molesters, vigilantes, and murderers who continue to maim and assassinate citizens and non-citizens alike.

Their only goal is to meet daily quotas to fill for-profit prisons where nursing mothers are separated from their babies; and deaths occur regularly due to torture; heat; and lack of food, water, health care, and oversight.

FLOCK is backed by billionaire venture capitalists and private equity firms, best known for gobbling up housing; and gutting hospitals, health care practices, and care homes. With great regard for profit, but NO regard for the ill or elderly.

Trump and FLOCK defy the Constitution and Bill of Rights, especially the Fourth Amendment which protects our privacy by prohibiting the

government from executing warrantless searches and seizures.

Those of us who helped put many of you on that dais, expect you - at the very least - TO OBEY THE LAW!

Every vote cast for FLOCK is a knife-in-the-back of every person watching tonight, every person living in or going through Costa Mesa, in perpetuity. Every vote is a willful gift to Trump and ICE to assist in dismantling Democracy in this city and this country. This will be your legacy, and we will call it out everywhere you go. You will join the other councilmembers with blood on their hands like Righeimer, Mensinger, and their MAGA majority whose vote in March 2011 caused the suicide death of Huy Pham, as he jumped from this building to his death. IT'S YOUR CHOICE!

Priscilla Rocco

The Auto Wire



Tracking the Flock: A Running Record of Reported License Plate Camera Misuse

Shawn Henry

Fri, July 17, 2026 at 9:44 AM PDT



Tracking the Flock: A Running Record of Reported License Plate Camera Misuse

Flock Safety's automated license plate readers are now installed in thousands of U.S. towns, marketed to police departments, homeowners associations, and school districts as a low-cost way to solve crimes and find missing people. But the same feature that makes the system powerful — a searchable, cross-jurisdictional record of where a car has been — has also made it a repeated target of abuse by the people who have access to it.

Below is a record of individually reported incidents, organized by category, with sources for each. Because most of this misuse has surfaced only after victims noticed it themselves rather than through routine oversight, researchers who track these cases describe their counts as floors, not ceilings.

Officers using the system to track romantic partners, exes, or people they were interested in

This is the largest and best-documented category. The Institute for Justice (IJ), a legal nonprofit that litigates against warrantless surveillance, has maintained a running tally that stood at 24 cases as of mid-July 2026, with the majority occurring since 2024.

- **Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania (2021):** Officer Michael McSherry pleaded guilty to stalking charges for using license plate readers to track his estranged wife and other family members. (Source: Institute for Justice)
- **Kechi, Kansas (2023):** Lieutenant Victor Heiar pleaded guilty to computer crime and stalking for using Flock cameras to track his estranged wife. (Source: Institute for Justice)
- **Sedgwick, Kansas (2023):** Police Chief Lee Nygaard resigned after running his ex-girlfriend's plate and her new boyfriend's plate more than 200 times. (Source: Institute for Justice)
- **Costa Mesa, California (2023):** Officer Robert Josett used the department's Flock system to track a mistress and her other romantic interests; he pleaded guilty to multiple charges in April 2026. (Source: Institute for Justice; CBS Los Angeles)
- **Riverside County, California (2024):** Deputy Alexander Vanny, already facing a kidnapping charge involving his ex-fiancée, allegedly used Flock to track one of her friends; convicted on multiple charges in December 2025. (Source: Institute for Justice)
- **Orange City, Florida (2024–25):** Officer Jarmarus Brown ran his ex-

girlfriend's plate at least 69 times over roughly seven months, and also searched for her mother's plate at least 24 times and her father's at least 15 times. A fellow officer told investigators he'd warned Brown he "could get in trouble" for it. Brown was arrested and charged in 2025. (Source: 404 Media, citing court records)

- **Shelby County, Tennessee (2024):** Deputy Thadius Gordon was relieved of duty after allegedly using the ALPR database to locate his ex-wife more than 100 times. (Source: Institute for Justice)
- **Matteson, Illinois (2024):** Officer Jaila Cole-Clark allegedly ran hundreds of searches on a former domestic partner and that person's new partner; she resigned mid-investigation. (Source: Institute for Justice, citing stopflock.org)
- **Louisville, Kentucky (2025):** Officer Roberto Cedeno was charged with multiple felonies for allegedly tracking an ex-partner and her friends hundreds of times over two months. (Source: Institute for Justice)
- **Milwaukee, Wisconsin (2025–26):** Officer Josue Ayala allegedly searched the plate of a woman he was dating, and her ex, nearly 180 times over two months. The case only came to light after the victims checked the public audit-log site HavelBeenFlocked.com Ayala resigned, pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor, and in July 2026 was sentenced to one year of probation and a \$500 fine; his victims subsequently sought a restraining order against him. (Sources: Milwaukee Journal Sentinel; WISN; Institute for Justice)
- **Jerome County, Idaho (2025):** Sheriff George Oppedyk used the Flock system to search for his wife's vehicle hundreds of times; Idaho's Attorney General found no crime, but Oppedyk retired early in April 2026. (Source: Institute for Justice)
- **Kenosha County, Wisconsin (2025):** Deputy Frank McGrath resigned, with severance pay, after an internal probe found he used Flock to monitor a coworker he was romantically involved with. (Source: Institute for Justice)
- **Menasha, Wisconsin (2025):** Officer Cristian Morales was placed on leave and charged with misconduct in office after his ex-girlfriend

complained he had tracked her through Flock. (Source: Institute for Justice)

- **Braselton, Georgia (2025):** Police Chief Michael Steffman was arrested for allegedly using license plate readers to stalk multiple people, including a former partner; he resigned shortly beforehand. (Source: Institute for Justice)
- **Bonner Springs, Kansas (2025–26):** Detective Kyle Rector allegedly tracked his estranged wife and two men he suspected were her new partners; charged with multiple crimes in March 2026. (Source: Institute for Justice)
- **Monroe County, Florida (2026):** Deputy Lamar Roman allegedly used Flock to track, and eventually pull over, a woman he had met while providing security on a TV set. Arrested on charges of unauthorized computer access. (Source: Institute for Justice)
- **Coffee County, Georgia (2026):** Former Deputy Chris Rozar was charged after allegedly using the department's Flock system to stalk a woman he was interested in; he was fired at the start of the investigation. (Source: Institute for Justice)
- **Niceville, Florida (2026):** Former Officer Coty Hall pleaded no contest after using Flock to track another officer and that officer's spouse; caught via internal audit, fired following arrest in October 2025. (Source: Institute for Justice)
- **Winnebago County, Illinois (2026):** Former Deputy Tyler Bryan was charged with stalking and official misconduct for allegedly monitoring an ex-girlfriend and her new partner; surfaced after the victims sought a protective order. (Source: Institute for Justice)
- **Prairie Grove, Illinois (2026):** Officer William Copp, who also served as police chief of nearby Holiday Hills, was arrested for searching Flock for several former partners and at least one of their new partners. (Source: Institute for Justice)
- **Gwinnett County, Georgia (2026):** Officer Renee Downer was arrested and relieved of duty for allegedly using law enforcement databases, including Flock, to monitor an ex-partner. (Source: Institute

for Justice)

- **Pasadena, Texas (2026):** Sergeant Michael Palitz resigned while under investigation; city officials told KPRC 2 he had used the cameras to track and stalk a female officer. (Sources: KPRC 2/Click2Houston; Police1; Institute for Justice)
- **Greer, South Carolina (2026):** Corporal Kareem Lynch was fired after an internal audit found he used Flock to monitor the whereabouts of a subordinate he'd previously been involved with; Officer Sebastian Echeverry was fired in the same audit, with at least one search reportedly targeting an ex-girlfriend. (Sources: WLOS; Institute for Justice, citing FITSNews)

Georgia's 2026 "personal use" enforcement wave (not romantically motivated)

A separate, faster-moving cluster surfaced in Georgia in June and July 2026, where officers were caught looking up their own plates or those of relatives and acquaintances rather than pursuing anyone specific.

- **Cherokee County (June 2026):** Three sheriff's office employees, including deputies Chris Bryant and Mike Creeden, were fired and arrested on felony violation-of-oath charges after misusing the county's Flock system; two more supervisors, a sergeant and a lieutenant, were arrested days later in the same investigation. (Sources: Atlanta News First; 11Alive; WSB-TV)
- **Albany (July 6–7, 2026):** Five former Albany Police Department officers — Tytianna Davis, Jade Jackson, Nicholas Richardson, Brittney Smith, and Issac Whitus — were arrested by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation after an internal audit found they'd accessed retained Flock data for non-law-enforcement purposes. All five were terminated. (Source: FOX 5 Atlanta)
- **Greene County (July 8, 2026):** Deputy Quinsha Goss was fired and arrested after an audit found she'd accessed the county's Flock system for personal reasons multiple times over a three-month period. (Sources: WJCL; FOX 5 Atlanta)

- **Fayetteville (reported July 17, 2026):** The Fayetteville Police Department fired three officers after an internal audit tool flagged that they'd searched license plates belonging to themselves, family members, or acquaintances, "without a legitimate law-enforcement purpose," in the department's words. None of the searches involved a stalking target; the Georgia Bureau of Investigation is running an independent criminal review. The Auto Wire, covering the story the same day, noted this made it the second Georgia department in ten days to catch this kind of "curiosity" misuse through a department-wide audit rather than a victim complaint. (Sources: WSB-TV; The Auto Wire)

Flock's senior public affairs director, Trevor Chandler, addressed the pattern directly to WSB-TV, saying, "Any misuse of the Flock system is unacceptable, period."

Unauthorized access by federal agencies

- **ICE "side-door" access (revealed May 2025):** A 404 Media investigation, based on records from the Danville, Illinois Police Department, found more than 4,000 nationwide Flock lookups logged by local and state police with reasons like "immigration," "ICE," or "ICE WARRANT" — effectively giving ICE informal access to a system it has no direct contract with, despite state laws in Illinois, California, and Virginia barring ALPR data from being used for immigration enforcement. (Source: 404 Media)
- **Abortion-related tracking (revealed June 2025):** In the same reporting window, 404 Media found a Texas officer had used Flock's nationwide lookup tool to search for a woman who had self-administered an abortion. The disclosure prompted an Illinois Secretary of State investigation and led Flock to remove Illinois, California, and Virginia from its national lookup network. (Source: 404 Media)
- **Broader federal access (October 2025):** Later 404 Media reporting found that ICE, the U.S. Secret Service, and the U.S. Navy had all obtained some form of access into Flock's nationwide camera network. (Source: 404 Media)

Data exposure incidents

- **Search-log leak via public search engines (June 2026):** 404 Media and Colorado's NoCo Privacy Coalition found that Flock had inadvertently allowed officers' logged search "reasons," and in some cases the specific plates searched, to be indexed and surfaced by DuckDuckGo and Bing — exposing internal audit data that was never meant to be public. (Source: 404 Media)

The pattern across cases

Taken together, these incidents point to the same structural gap repeatedly: audit trails exist, but they only catch misuse when an agency actively reviews them, and most of these cases became public only after a victim went looking on their own — often via the public log-checking tool HavelBeenFlocked.com. That pattern, combined with the volume of new cases surfacing weekly through mid-2026, has driven dozens of cities to cancel their Flock contracts and prompted at least one congressional inquiry into the company's practices.

A note on scope: this list reflects incidents that have been reported by name in news coverage, court filings, or tracked by organizations like the Institute for Justice as of July 17, 2026. Given the pace of new disclosures, it is very likely incomplete.

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From: [Shainna Marie](#)
To: [CITY CLERK](#)
Subject: no Flock Cameras
Date: Tuesday, July 21, 2026 7:48:19 AM

No to Flock Cameras!

Local resident and teacher,
Shainna

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From: [ESCOBAR, SERGIO](#)
To: [CITY CLERK](#)
Subject: Fw: OPPOSED TO FLOCK CAMERAS
Date: Tuesday, July 21, 2026 12:03:32 PM
Attachments: [image.png](#)
[image.png](#)
[image.png](#)

Hello,

I am forwarding for Public Comment.

Best regards,



Sergio Escobar

Management Analyst

City Manager's Office

O: (714) 754-5156 | C: (714) 925-7457

77 Fair Drive | Costa Mesa | CA 92626



From: Jerilynn Martin <jlmbandit2@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2026 11:32 AM
To: CITY COUNCIL <CITYCOUNCIL@costamesaca.gov>
Subject: OPPOSED TO FLOCK CAMERAS

Dear Council,

Flock cameras invade our privacy rights and have been known to cause harm to individuals based on faulty data.

I implore you to void and remove any contracts or cameras from Costa Mesa for this system. Please honor the rights of citizens in Costa Mesa and avoid future litigation.

Thank you,

Jerilynn Martin
East Side, CM

[Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer](#)

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From: [ESCOBAR, SERGIO](#)
To: [CITY CLERK](#)
Subject: Fw: No Flock Cameras
Date: Tuesday, July 21, 2026 10:59:29 AM
Attachments: [image.png](#)
[image.png](#)
[image.png](#)
[image.png](#)
[image.png](#)

Hello,

I am forwarding for Public Comment.

Best regards,



Sergio Escobar

Management Analyst

City Manager's Office

O: (714) 754-5156 | C: (714) 925-7457

77 Fair Drive | Costa Mesa | CA 92626



From: Natalie Anter <nataliefanter@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2026 10:38 AM
To: CITY COUNCIL <CITYCOUNCIL@costamesaca.gov>
Subject: No Flock Cameras

To Whom It May Concern:

I urge you to not sign a contract with flock
We don't want these cameras in our city
Please protect our privacy

Regards,

Natalie

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From: [ESCOBAR, SERGIO](#)
To: [CITY CLERK](#)
Subject: Fw: No Flock Cameras in Costa Mesa
Date: Tuesday, July 21, 2026 10:59:53 AM
Attachments: [image.png](#)
[image.png](#)
[image.png](#)
[image.png](#)
[image.png](#)

Hello,

I am forwarding for Public Comment.

Best regards,



Sergio Escobar

Management Analyst

City Manager's Office

O: (714) 754-5156 | C: (714) 925-7457

77 Fair Drive | Costa Mesa | CA 92626



From: Maile Hanoian <mailehanoian@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2026 10:08 AM
To: CITY COUNCIL <CITYCOUNCIL@costamesaca.gov>
Subject: No Flock Cameras in Costa Mesa

Please do not enforce flock cameras in Costa Mesa.

Maile Hanoian

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From: [ESCOBAR, SERGIO](#)
To: [CITY CLERK](#)
Subject: Fw: No flock cameras in Costa Mesa ca
Date: Tuesday, July 21, 2026 12:03:24 PM
Attachments: [image.png](#)
[image.png](#)
[image.png](#)
[image.png](#)
[image.png](#)

Hello,

I am forwarding for Public Comment.

Best regards,



Sergio Escobar

Management Analyst

City Manager's Office

O: (714) 754-5156 | C: (714) 925-7457

77 Fair Drive | Costa Mesa | CA 92626



From: Elizabeth Negron <tigger4420@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2026 11:34 AM
To: CITY COUNCIL <CITYCOUNCIL@costamesaca.gov>
Subject: No flock cameras in Costa Mesa ca

Dear Costa Mesa City Council,

I urge you not to approve a contract for Flock cameras in our city. We value our privacy and do not want our movements and personal information collected, stored, or potentially shared with outside agencies.

Please protect the privacy and rights of Costa Mesa residents and vote against Flock cameras.

Thank you for listening to our concerns.

Costa Mesa resident

From: [ESCOBAR, SERGIO](#)
To: [CITY CLERK](#)
Subject: Fw: Flock cameras
Date: Tuesday, July 21, 2026 11:01:30 AM
Attachments: [image.png](#)
[image.png](#)
[image.png](#)
[image.png](#)
[image.png](#)

Hello,

I am forwarding for Public Comment.

Best regards,



Sergio Escobar

Management Analyst

City Manager's Office

O: (714) 754-5156 | C: (714) 925-7457

77 Fair Drive | Costa Mesa | CA 92626



From: Faye Hanoian <fayehanoian@me.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2026 11:00 AM
To: CITY COUNCIL <CITYCOUNCIL@costamesaca.gov>
Subject: Flock cameras

CM City Council,

I urge you to not sign a contract with flock. We don't want these cameras in our city. Please protect our privacy.

Best,

Faye

Sent from my iPhone

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From: [ESCOBAR, SERGIO](#)
To: [CITY CLERK](#)
Subject: Fw: Flock Camera Comment from CM Parent
Date: Tuesday, July 21, 2026 10:59:09 AM
Attachments: [Outlook-weuhum5m.png](#)
[Outlook-aqlfnlnh.png](#)
[Outlook-xespaslp.png](#)
[Outlook-yuwgc0il.png](#)
[Outlook-hr0l2n5x.png](#)

Hello,

I am forwarding for Public Comment.

Best regards,



Sergio Escobar

Management Analyst

City Manager's Office

O: (714) 754-5156 | C: (714) 925-7457

77 Fair Drive | Costa Mesa | CA 92626



From: Lisa Masson <lisamasson4@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2026 10:54 AM
To: CITY COUNCIL <CITYCOUNCIL@costamesaca.gov>
Subject: Flock Camera Comment from CM Parent

Hello,

I am a resident of Costa Mesa, and I am highly concerned about the Flock cameras in our city. These cameras create a dangerous surveillance state, are misused, and are able to be hacked. They make our city much more dangerous. As a woman, and as a parent I do not want them in my community. I do not want my child on camera simply for existing in public spaces. I do not want my car tracked. Please vote against this dangerous technology. Cancel the flock contract. Take the cameras down and wipe their memories. Make our city safer and remove the flock cameras please!

Thank you for your time.

Lisa Masson

Lisa Masson
LisaMasson4@gmail.com

From: [Samuel Castaneda](#)
To: [CITY CLERK](#)
Subject: Flock vote at City Council
Date: Tuesday, July 21, 2026 11:35:02 AM

Costa Mesa City Council,

I love the food in Costa Mesa and the all the other fun places. It is disappointing to know that this city is using alprs. In the past I've received tickets for my vehicle in places I haven't been due to automatic cameras and it's been a hassle. Knowing flock is using camera that operate on their own flagging license plates and that it could happen again makes me not want to be in Costa Mesa with my friends even if there's a restaurant or event we want to visit there. Replacing flock with another alpr company is not a valid solution!

Sam Castaneda

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From: calebdanielson@icloud.com
To: [CITY CLERK](#)
Subject: FLOCK SAFETY AUTOMATED LICENSE PLATE READER (ALPR) 26-315
Date: Monday, July 20, 2026 10:30:48 PM

Dear Mayor Stephens and City Council:

I am a resident of Costa Mesa and writing to express my opposition to mass surveillance through the use of Flock Automated License Plate Reader cameras in our city. The regular use of the current network of ALPR cameras amounts to a dragnet search of nearly every vehicle traveling into, out of, or within the city of Costa Mesa.

I urge the City Council to end its contract with Flock immediately. The current agreement threatens the freedom, liberty, and privacy of every person in our city. The trade off of some unquantifiable increase in safety and security is simply not worth the risk of these systems being misused, or the of the data falling into the wrong hands. And, as Benjamin Franklin once said, "Those who would give up essential liberty, to purchase a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety."

Sincerely,
Caleb Danielson

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From: [Hope Johnson](#)
To: [CITY CLERK](#)
Subject: Flock Cameras
Date: Tuesday, July 21, 2026 9:00:49 AM

Dear City Council,

As a Costa Mesa resident, I am opposed to the use of surveillance on our streets. The opportunity to abuse this information and invade an individual's privacy is too great. Please end the contract with Flock.

Thank you,

Hope Johnson

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From: [James Peters](#)
To: [CITY CLERK](#)
Subject: Flock Cameras - Agenda Item 6
Date: Monday, July 20, 2026 1:59:20 PM

I am writing to express deep concern that the City's deployment of 46 Flock Safety automated license plate reader (ALPR) cameras constitutes an unconstitutional dragnet surveillance program that violates residents' rights under the **Fourth Amendment** to the U.S. Constitution and the **California Constitution, Article 1, Section 1** (right to privacy).

The Fourth Amendment protects against unreasonable searches and seizures. While a single license plate photo on a public road may not trigger this protection, the pervasive network of Flock cameras—strategically placed at major intersections and entry/exit points—creates a comprehensive record of vehicle movements across the city. With data retained for 365 days and accessible to dozens of agencies, this system enables the tracking of individuals' patterns, routines, and associations without a warrant or probable cause. This is precisely the type of "mosaic" surveillance the Supreme Court warned against in *Carpenter v. United States* (2018).

California's Constitution provides even stronger protections. **Article 1, Section 1** explicitly guarantees an inalienable right to privacy. The aggregation of location data through Flock's network invades this fundamental right by allowing the government to monitor the whole of residents' movements in a way that would be impossible through traditional policing.

Recent lawsuits across the country (e.g., in Norfolk, San Jose, and Boulder) argue that dense ALPR networks like ours cross the line into unconstitutional mass surveillance. Documented misuse by a former Costa Mesa officer and concerns about data sharing with federal or out-of-state agencies further heighten the risk of abuse.

I respectfully urge the Council to:

- Terminate or significantly scale back the Flock contract.
- Prioritize less intrusive alternatives during the July 21 discussion.
- Ensure any continued use fully complies with both the U.S. and California Constitutions through strict warrant requirements and enhanced privacy safeguards.

Public safety should not come at the expense of our constitutional rights. I ask that you protect Costa Mesa residents by addressing this issue decisively.

Thank you for your attention. I request that this comment be included in the public record for the upcoming meeting.

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From: AYousufi@cair.com
To: [CITY CLERK](#)
Subject: Cancel the flock contract now!
Date: Monday, July 20, 2026 2:56:06 PM

Costa Mesa City Council Costa Mesa City Council,

To: Mayor Stevens and the Costa Mesa City Council,

I am a concerned community member writing to strongly urge you to vote to cancel the City's contract with Flock Safety. I do not support taxpayer dollars being used to enable any kind of mass surveillance tool, whether it is Flock or any other tech provider.

There are currently 80,000-100,000 Flock ALPR cameras active in nearly all states across the US, capturing more than 20 billion vehicle reads every month. Every license plate that passes by a Flock ALPR is captured indiscriminately. Ai detects unique features of each vehicle like bumper stickers, damage, or vehicle mounted accessories to create a searchable vehicle signature. No reasonable suspicion, probable cause, or judicial warrant is required. All of this easily searchable data goes to privately controlled Flock databases. Customers, like Costa Mesa PD, can easily use this tool to track our movements both in real time and historically.

Dragnet mass surveillance does not make us safer. Aggregating our data into a privatized AI-powered mass surveillance ecosystem that is retained indefinitely, with no public oversight, backed by tech billionaire investors with a stated anti-democratic purpose, is not public safety.

Flock's ALPR technology is designed to enable data sharing across jurisdictions, creating pathways for access by out-of-state and federal agencies including the Department of Homeland Security. Even when cities do not intend to share information directly with federal agencies, using a third-party networked system like Flock can allow external agencies to query local data. These are real and well-documented risks of indirect access by outside agencies across the country, which have led to over 80 cities canceling/suspending their use of Flock.

What's more, the City's contract with Flock fails to contain adequate administrative safeguards that would prohibit Flock from sharing our data with federal and out-of-state agencies. It also fails to hold Flock accountable for any unauthorized data-sharing, thus placing all the legal risk on the City and its taxpayers.

I applaud the City's efforts to support residents that have been impacted by immigration enforcement activity, including the Legal Defense Fund, Community Resources Preparedness Packet, Know Your Rights/mutual aid bus stop signage, and food assistance funding. However, allowing surveillance infrastructure like Flock undermines and contradicts the spirit of those efforts as it puts the City's immigrant families at greater risk, at a time when immigration enforcement activity is increasing. If you truly want ICE out of our community, you should not subscribe Costa Mesa to technology that makes kidnapping easier.

The threat to the residents of Costa Mesa is not hypothetical. Abuse of the system has already

happened in our city. As you know, a former CMPD officer, Robert Josette, was prosecuted after it was discovered that he was stalking women and their romantic interests using the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS) and the Flock ALPR system. Unlike CLETS, however, the Flock ALPR system is not run or regulated by the California Department of Justice. Thus, officers like Josette are only able to face criminal charges for misuse of CLETS, not Flock. The accountability for misuse of Flock is clearly lacking and presents a public safety concern, particularly for women.

Concerned residents had to review network audit data from other cities to uncover unlawful searches being allowed on the CMPD Flock system for federal agencies including "HSI" and "ATF." In spite of this, Costa Mesa Police Department continues to obfuscate how they are using the Flock ALPR system. Public record requests for audit data made in good faith and in accordance with the law have been denied. Dozens of other cities in the region provided their records without issue. This refusal to take accountability and provide transparency is unacceptable. The City is allowing our privacy rights and civil liberties to be circumvented by a tech company with a documented record of deception and secrecy. Costa Mesa should prioritize community-based approaches to public safety that respect the rights, dignity, and safety of all residents.

Please do not continue to allow our privacy rights and civil liberties to be circumvented by a tech company with a documented record of deception and secrecy. I urge the City Council to vote to cancel the Flock Safety contract and use those taxpayer dollars to invest in community-based approaches to public safety that respect the rights, dignity, and safety of all residents.

Thank you,

AYousufi@cair.com

,

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From: [Hayden Pearce](#)
To: [CITY CLERK](#)
Subject: Cancel ALPR Flock cameras
Date: Tuesday, July 21, 2026 11:44:31 AM

Flock cameras are an invasion of privacy and nobody wants them here in Orange County. Data from ALPRs has lead to wrongful arrests, profiling and stalking ex- partners from police officers. This data is stored into profiles of citizens and kept long term in data centers which is quickly evolving into a Big Brother like program from the book 1984. Do your part from keeping Orange County from turning into a dystopian totalitarian society. Do not contract with Flock or other ALPR vendors.

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July 21, 2026

Costa Mesa City Council
77 Fair Drive,
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

Via email

Re: ACLU of Southern California Urges Costa Mesa to End Its Contract with Flock Safety, Inc. for Automated License Plate Readers Technology

Dear Members of the Costa Mesa City Council,

The ACLU of Southern California strongly urges the Costa Mesa City Council to discontinue its agreement with Flock Safety, Inc. (Flock) for Automated License Plate Readers (ALPR) technology. Our two decades of research, litigation, and advocacy about the government's use of ALPRs generally, and Flock technology specifically, have made it abundantly clear that this technology is harmful to civil liberties and dangerous to Southland communities. No amount of careful policymaking can meaningfully avoid the irreparable harm that the continued use of Flock will bring to the Costa Mesa community. We ask that the Council end its contract with Flock and immediately discontinue the use of ALPR technology in the City.

I. Flock's Ever-Growing Dragnet of Surveillance Violates Costa Mesa Residents' Privacy and Makes Them Less Safe.

The use of ALPR technology poses significant risk to the privacy and civil rights of Costa Mesa residents, particularly residents of color and noncitizens. ALPR technology perpetuates a dragnet of surveillance by collecting and storing the license plates of cars that pass through their cameras' fields of view. After being matched to dates, times, and locations, this information can then be compiled into a database that reveals sensitive information about where individuals work, live, associate, and visit. Some Flock cameras even follow select individuals or entire groups of people, further raising concerns about this technology's impact on individuals' privacy rights and First Amendment right to freely express themselves and associate.

Given the invasive power of ALPR technologies, it is little surprise how widely they have been abused by police officers throughout the country. Just this week, reports surfaced about officers exploiting Flock cameras to search for individuals, not their vehicles, at least hundreds of times,

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Chandra S. Bhatnagar

PRESIDENT Carlos Amador **VICE PRESIDENT** Malek Moazzam-Doulat **SECRETARY** Zella Knight **TREASURER** Elliot Gordon
AFFILIATE EQUITY OFFICER Nichelle Carr **NATIONAL BOARD REPRESENTATIVE** Julie Morales

despite Flock’s insistence that its technology cannot be used for this purpose.¹ Police can use Flock’s nationwide network of cameras to query hundreds, if not thousands, of cameras at once. Flock’s AI capabilities and image recognition determine what footage, and which people are relevant to the search. This allows police to use Flock’s nationwide network of cameras as a proxy search engine and search for individuals or groups based on their clothing, tattoos, bumper stickers, or, more concerningly, even race or symbols of their political affiliations.²

The Orange County community has already felt the harm to their First Amendment rights associated with Flock technology. Just this month, it was revealed that police across California used the Orange County Sheriff’s Department’s Flock Safety ALPR system to track protesters at least 145 times within the span of a year and seven months.³ The majority of the police searches for protestors correlate with the dates of protests against ICE.⁴ This data includes individuals’ license plate numbers, timestamps, locations, and photos of vehicles and their surroundings.⁵ Police logs show previous Flock AI-powered systems allow them to search for very general, identifiers covering broad categories such as “protest,” “ICE PROTEST,” and other vague terms.⁶ Orange County Sheriff’s Department’s ALPR policy—which is substantively similar to and authored by the same corporation as Costa Mesa Police Department’s—could not prevent these third parties from accessing and misusing the vast amount of information collected through its Flock cameras.

Costa Mesa itself saw the dangerous effects of Flock firsthand when a Costa Mesa police officer used Flock to track and stalk his wife, mistress, and romantic rivals.⁷ This is not an isolated instance. Instead, data reveals a widespread trend of police officers using Flock to stalk their romantic partners.⁸ Public records requests show that there have been 24 reported incidents of officers abusing ALPR cameras to keep tabs on their current partners, exes, and other love interests, a number that is likely to be a significant undercount.⁹ Nearly all of these officers were

¹ Joseph Cox, *How Cops Use Flock to Track People, Not Cars*, 404 MEDIA (July 16, 2026, at 09:56 A.M.) <https://www.404media.co/how-cops-use-flock-to-track-people-not-cars/>.

² *Id.*

³ Ben Camacho, *California cops tracked protesters using Orange County Sheriff’s flock system*, CALONews (July 8, 2026) https://www.calonews.com/communities/orange-county/california-cops-tracked-protesters-using-orange-county-sheriffs-flock-system/article_9f2e1d2c-2cec-49ee-b736-5792478f75c4.html.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ Michele Gile, Matthew Rodriguez, *Costa Mesa reconsiders use of Flock license plate readers*, CBS NEWS (July 13, 2026, 5:31 PM PDT) <https://www.cbsnews.com/losangeles/news/costa-mesa-reconsiders-use-of-flock-license-plate-readers/>.

⁸ Christopher Ingraham, *Police Have Reportedly Used License Plate Readers to Stalk Romantic Interests at Least 24 Times in Recent Years*, INSTITUTE FOR JUSTICE (Updated July 16, 2026) <https://ij.org/police-have-reportedly-used-license-plate-readers-to-stalk-romantic-interests-at-least-14-times-in-recent-years/>.

⁹ *Id.*

criminally charged for domestic violence, but only after survivors reported these incidences directly— not as the result of internal police investigations. Continuing the City’s contract with Flock could allow additional police officers in and outside of the agency to use these dangerous tools to commit further acts of violence against community members.

All of these reports demonstrate the ways Flock actively threatens everyday Americans’ bedrock First Amendment rights to freely associate or express political views. Though Costa Mesa Police Department purports to use this technology “to locate stolen vehicles and solve crimes involving the use of automobiles,”¹⁰ reports have shown time and time again that the police inevitably weaponize this technology to surveil members of the public while they exercise their freedom of speech—regardless of what the original justification offered for its acquisition in the first instances. This technology fundamentally makes our community less safe.

II. Because Flock’s Data is Accessible to ICE, Costa Mesa’s Immigrant Community Remains at Risk

Not only does Flock threaten First Amendment rights of community members, but Flock information may be shared with immigration enforcement agencies, putting immigrant community members at risk.¹¹ Though Flock claims to not share information with immigration officials,¹² there have been multiple reports of ICE indeed using this technology for immigration enforcement through “informal” favors by local and state police for the federal government.¹³ ALPR databases are often comprised of data collected by its public sector and private customers

¹⁰ Report by the Costa Mesa Police Department to the Costa Mesa City Council, *Flock Safety Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) Report and Presentation* at 3-4 (July 21, 2021), available at

<https://costamesa.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=15696589&GUID=4C34D79D-6D35-4157-B362-DCCCAE27901F>.

¹¹ See IMMIGRATION POLICY TRACKING PROJECT, *Reported: ICE using automated license-plate-reader cameras for immigration enforcement via state/local police* (Updated February 10, 2026), available at <https://immpolicytracking.org/policies/reported-ice-accessing-flock-automated-license-plate-reader-cameras-via-local-law-enforcement/>; see also Jay Stanley, *I’m Hearing About More Pushback Against Flock, Fueled by Concerns Over Anti-Immigrant Uses*, ACLU NATIONAL (Aug. 21, 2025) <https://www.aclu.org/news/privacy-technology/tracking-alpr-cameras/flock-pushback>.

¹² FLOCK, *Does Flock Share Data With ICE?* (Jan. 6, 2026) <https://www.flocksafety.com/blog/does-flock-share-data-with-ice>

¹³ See, e.g., Khari Johnson and Mohamed Al Elew, *California police are illegally sharing license plate data with ICE and Border Patrol*, CALMATTERS (June 13, 2025) <https://calmatters.org/economy/technology/2025/06/california-police-sharing-license-plate-reader-data/>; Russell Brandom, *Exclusive: ICE is about to start tracking license plates across the US*, THE VERGE (Jan. 26, 2018) <https://www.theverge.com/2018/1/26/16932350/ice-immigration-customs-license-plate-recognition-contract-vigilant-solutions>; Vasudha Talla, *Documents Reveal ICE Using Driver Location Data From Local Police for Deportations*, ACLU OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA, (Mar. 13, 2019) <https://www.aclu.org/blog/immigrants-rights/ice-and-border-patrol-abuses/documents-reveal-ice-using-driver-location-data>.

operating the company's license plate readers. As a result, ICE can tap into an ALPR system's nationwide database of license plates and associated location records for the purposes of targeting immigrants while they are driving to work, running errands, or bringing their kids to school.¹⁴ Nothing in Costa Mesa's current policy explicitly prevents sharing information with immigration officials. And even if it did, Costa Mesa cannot control whether some other third-party shares Costa Mesa community members' information with immigration enforcement authorities—a problem inherent in these networked ALPR systems that we have seen reoccur for years.¹⁵ Even California's decade-old laws forbidding information sharing with ICE have not succeeded in preventing Flock from doing so.¹⁶ As recently as last year, the Orange County Sheriff's Department was one of ten agencies that searched its ALPR system on behalf of federal immigration agencies.¹⁷

III. Cities Across California and the United States are Abandoning their Use of Flock Cameras Over Concerns About Data Sharing and Flock's Dishonesty About its Own Technology

While Costa Mesa Police Department's report paints Flock as a tool to make policing more efficient and effective, audits by other policing agencies suggest that this technology prioritizes speed and quantity over accuracy and does not enhance public safety. Just this month, the Los Angeles Office of the Inspector General's review of LAPD's use of Flock found multiple areas

¹⁴ See, e.g., Jason Koebler, Joseph Cox, *ICE Taps into Nationwide AI-Enabled Camera Network, Data Shows*, 404 MEDIA (May 27, 2025, 9:36 A.M.) <https://www.404media.co/ice-taps-into-nationwide-ai-enabled-camera-network-data-shows/>; *Privacy Impact Assessment, Acquisition and Use of License Plate Reader (LPR) Data from a Commercial Service DHS/ICE/PIA-039(a)*, (Dec. 27, 2017) <https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/privacy-pia-ice-lpr-january2018.pdf>.

¹⁵ See, e.g., Daniella Silva and Cyrus Farivar, *ACLU calls for U.S. law enforcement to stop sharing license plate data with ICE*, NBC NEWS (Mar. 13, 2019 15:36 E.T.) <https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/security/aclu-calls-u-s-law-enforcement-stop-sharing-license-plate-n983021>.

¹⁶ Khari Johnson and Mohamed Al Elew, *California police are illegally sharing license plate data with ICE and Border Patrol*, CALMATTERS (June 13, 2025) <https://calmatters.org/economy/technology/2025/06/california-police-sharing-license-plate-reader-data/>; AUDITOR OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, *Report 2019-118: Automated License Plate Readers: To Better Protect Individuals' Privacy, Law Enforcement Must Increase Its Safeguards for the Data it Collects* (February 2020) <https://information.auditor.ca.gov/pdfs/reports/2019-118.pdf>; see also Dave Maass and Hayley Tsukayama, *California Auditor Releases Damning Report about Law Enforcement's Use of Automated License Plate Readers*, ELECTRONIC FRONTIER FOUNDATION (February 13, 2020) <https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2020/02/california-auditor-releases-damning-report-about-law-enforcements-use-automated>.

¹⁷ Khari Johnson and Mohamed Al Elew, *California police are illegally sharing license plate data with ICE and Border Patrol*, CALMATTERS (June 13, 2025) <https://calmatters.org/economy/technology/2025/06/california-police-sharing-license-plate-reader-data/>

where using this technology led to inconsistent, duplicative, and inaccurate policing.¹⁸ For instance, delays in updating records may cause a license plate to remain on a “Hot List” of stolen vehicles, even after the vehicle has been recovered or is no longer considered stolen.¹⁹ During a two-month review period, officers admitted that on 161 occasions Flock had issued an alert for license plates where the vehicle was later determined not to be stolen.²⁰ This not only creates confusion and inconvenience for motorists, it endangers the rights and lives of everyday people subjected to unnecessary stops based on inaccurate or outdated Flock alerts.²¹ LAPD moved to suspend its contract with Flock pending renegotiation to address concerns over civil liberties, civil rights, and data sharing.²²

Additionally, the Costa Mesa Police Department’s report highlights several instances where the use of Flock’s technology led to violations of the privacy and security of Californians. Flock took corrective actions to remedy those breaches; however, the damage was already done. There is no telling the harm that was done through those 600,000 unauthorized queries by federal agencies or through the access by out-of-state agencies that may not have California’s strident privacy protections.

Further, Flock’s misrepresentations about its own products call into question whether local governments should take Flock at its word. In April 2026, Flock’s own safety expert told the Oshkosh City Council in Wisconsin that their ALPRs did not create heatmaps that could be used to track vehicles.²³ The next morning, the City Council learned that Flock had lied and voted to immediately rescind its contract.²⁴ As Joe Stephenson, an Oshkosh City Councilmember stated, “I don’t know how I can make a decision or discern what’s right and what’s wrong, or even the capabilities of the system if you lie to me.” Just last week, Flock’s CEO Garrett Langley was made to apologize for his 2025 comments calling people who oppose Flock technology

¹⁸ LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT, Office of the Inspector General Report, *Review of Los Angeles Police Department Automated License Plate Reader System and Use in the Field* at 15-7 (July 10, 2026), available at https://www.lapdpolicecom.lacity.org/071426/BPC_26-184x.pdf

¹⁹ *Id.* at 16.

²⁰ *Id.*

²¹ Of the at least 1,201 people killed during interactions with the police in 2025, 112 died were killed after vehicle stops. See THE POLICE DATA ARCHIVE, *2025 Police Violence Report*, available at <https://policeviolencereport.org/>.

²² See Libor Jany, *LAPD renegotiating deal with Flock Safety to access company’s license plate readers*, L.A. TIMES (July 15, 2026, 5:17 PT) <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2026-07-14/lapd-police-commission-license-plate-scanner-oversight> Marc Cota-Robles, *Opponents and privacy advocates react after LAPD ends its contract with Flock Safety*, ABC7 EYEWITNESS NEWS (July 15, 2026, 11:18 PT) <https://abc7.com/post/opponents-privacy-advocates-react-lapd-ends-contract-flock-safety-camera-network/19514394/>;

²³ Drew Best, *Oshkosh council rescinds Flock camera contract after ‘false statements’*, WBAY NEWS (Apr. 22, 2026, 20:15 PT) <https://www.wbay.com/2026/04/23/oshkosh-council-rescinds-flock-camera-contract-after-false-statements/>

²⁴ *Id.*

“terrorists” and an organization tracking the locations of Flock’s widespread surveillance system a “terroristic organization.”²⁵

Over thirty localities have either deactivated or cancelled their Flock contracts because of similar concerns.²⁶ Given the unavoidable risks this technology poses to the rights of community members across Costa Mesa, we urge the Council to follow in suit of governing bodies across the country and cancel its contract with Flock.

Thank you for considering this letter. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Amaris Montes
Staff Attorney



Allison Rubinfeld
Staff Attorney

²⁵ Thomas Brewster, *AI Startup Flock Thinks It Can Eliminate All Crime in America*, FORBES (Sept. 3, 2025, 06:30 ET) <https://www.forbes.com/sites/thomasbrewster/2025/09/03/ai-startup-flock-thinks-it-can-eliminate-all-crime-in-america/>; Matt Novak, *Flock’s CEO Is Sorry for Calling Privacy Activists ‘Terrorists’*, GIZMOD0 (July 18, 2026, 09:58 ET) <https://gizmodo.com/flocks-ceo-is-sorry-for-calling-privacy-activists-terrorists-2000787247>.

²⁶ Jude Joffe-Block, *Why Some Cities are Ditching their Flock License Plate Readers*, NPR (Feb.19, 2026, 5:02 ET) <https://www.npr.org/2026/02/17/nx-s1-5612825/flock-contracts-canceled-immigration-surveillance-concerns>



1505 E 17th St #122, Santa Ana, CA 92705

July 21, 2026

Costa Mesa City Council
City Hall Council Chambers
77 Fair Drive
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

Re: Public Comment in Support of Terminating Costa Mesa's Flock Contract

Dear Mayor and Councilmembers,

My name is Angeles and I am the Digital Organizer with OCCORD — Orange County Communities Organized for Responsible Development. I am also here as a member of this Orange County community because what happens in Costa Mesa impacts all of us. Tonight, Costa Mesa has the opportunity to become the first city in Orange County to take a stand against the expansion of mass surveillance by ending its contract with Flock.

This decision is not just about a camera. It is about what kind of relationship we want between residents and our local government.

Flock's automated license plate readers collect information from every vehicle that passes by their cameras — not just vehicles connected to crimes. These systems capture license plates, locations, timestamps and even identifying vehicle features such as bumper stickers or damage. This creates a searchable record of people's movements without requiring suspicion, a warrant or a court order.

The harm caused by this technology is not hypothetical. Costa Mesa has already experienced the consequences of giving this level of access to a surveillance system.

As many of us know, a former Costa Mesa police officer pleaded guilty to using law enforcement tools, including Flock license plate readers, to track his wife, mistress and romantic rivals. Even after he was placed on leave from the department, he continued accessing the Flock system to obtain information about his mistress's new boyfriend. This was not an outside hacker. This was someone who had authorized access to a powerful surveillance tool and used it for personal purposes.

This case demonstrates the fundamental problem with creating large databases of people's movements: once this information exists, the risk of misuse exists. And this is not an isolated situation. Across the country, there have been documented cases of law enforcement officers misusing automated license plate readers to track, stalk and target individuals who were not suspected of crimes.

Privacy is not only about what happens after misuse occurs; it is about recognizing that some forms of data collection create risks from the moment they begin.



1505 E 17th St #122, Santa Ana, CA 92705

Residents have also raised serious concerns about transparency and accountability. Public records requests seeking information about how this system is being used have not received the level of transparency residents deserve. Communities should not have to fight to understand how their own government is using tools that track their daily lives.

We are often told that surveillance makes us safer, but surveillance is not the same thing as safety. Real public safety comes from investing in communities, building trust and addressing the root causes that impact residents' quality of life.

Flock is a private company whose business model depends on expanding its surveillance network. The responsibility of a city government, however, is not to protect a company's growth — it is to protect the rights and dignity of the people it serves.

Costa Mesa has the opportunity to lead Orange County. Other cities are watching what happens here. By canceling this contract, Costa Mesa can show that protecting privacy, accountability and public trust are essential parts of public safety.

We urge the Council to terminate the Flock contract and take the next step toward ending the use of automated license plate readers in Costa Mesa.

Thank you,

Angeles Ochoa

Digital Organizer

Orange County Communities Organized for Responsible Development (OCCORD)

July 20, 2026

Costa Mesa City Council

77 Fair Drive

Costa Mesa, CA. 92626

RE: Opposition to Proposed 700% - 1250% Increase to the Business License Tax

Dear Mayor and Members of the City Council,

I am writing on behalf of small businesses, especially restaurants, in Costa Mesa regarding the proposed overhaul of the business license tax, which would replace the current flat rate fee structure with a gross-receipts model charging \$0.50 per \$1,000 in revenue.

If one asks AI for "Types of businesses in Costa Mesa, CA with \$1,000,000 – 5,000,000 in revenue" the first sector that comes up is restaurants. For an average restaurant that generates between \$1,000,000 to \$5,000,000 in gross-receipts the \$200 current flat fee would increase between 700% to 1250% under the new structure.

Under the Business License Reform Measure section of your Agenda Report, it states "The proposed business license rate structure is designed to avoid impact on smaller businesses". As proposed, this statement is simply incorrect! We ask the Council to seriously consider the compounding burden this increase places on small businesses, restaurants in particular, for the following reasons:

1. **Restaurants operate under incredibly thin margins.** Unlike many other industries, restaurants can typically run on margins of 3-5%. It is a constant struggle to keep these razor thin margins intact. A tax tied to gross-receipts rather than profit disproportionately impacts these businesses, since it is charged regardless of whether the business is actually profitable in a given year.
2. **The Costa Mesa Business License Tax does not exist in isolation.** Restaurants and small businesses in Costa Mesa are already absorbing:
 - Rising commercial property taxes
 - California sales tax, among the highest in the nation
 - Payroll taxes and minimum wage increases, which continue to rise annually
 - Workers' compensation and insurance costs, which have climbed sharply
 - Even our local trash service went up 11% this month

Layering a 700% - 1250% increase in the business license tax on top of these existing pressures compounds the already high cost of operating in Costa Mesa at a time when many restaurants are already operating on the margin of viability.

3. **The impact is disproportionate relative to city revenue gained.** The business license tax currently generates approximately \$940,000 annually, or about 0.5% of the City's general fund. We respectfully ask the Council to weigh whether an increase of this magnitude on small businesses is proportionate to the relatively modest share of the general fund that this represents.
4. **Risk of driving businesses out of Costa Mesa.** As Councilman Chavez noted at the June 9 meeting, there is a real risk in setting a rate that discourages businesses from operating in the City. Restaurants and small businesses already operate on thin margins in a highly competitive market; a steep, one-time jump in fixed costs may push some to relocate, forgo reinvestment and hiring or to simply close.

Our request: We ask the Council to consider the following before placing this measure on the November 2026 ballot:

- A lower per-\$1,000 rate for small businesses within \$1,000,000 – \$5,000,000 gross-receipts
- A distinct, reduced tier or cap for low-margin industries such as restaurants
- Public engagement with the restaurant and small business community before finalizing the rate structure

We appreciate the City's commitment to fiscal sustainability and understand the tax is overdue for an update. We simply ask that any new structure account for the realities faced by small, low-margin businesses that make up much of Costa Mesa's commercial character.

Thank you for your consideration. We welcome the opportunity to discuss this further before the Council finalizes its decision.

Respectfully,



Cindy Brahs
Costa Mesa Small Business Owner
2094 National Avenue
Costa Mesa, CA. 92627
(949)644-2948