

# The Dragnet on the Border

## A Public Policy Briefing on Flock Safety ALPR Deployments in Trinidad, Colorado

---

Prepared for: Citizens and Stakeholders of Trinidad, Colorado

Prepared by: Hopping Mad Games, LLC

Research conducted by: Hopping Mad Games, LLC

Publication date: June 21, 2026

Classification: Public Policy Briefing Book

### Why This Briefing Exists

---

Trinidad residents deserve a clear public record before the city normalizes automated vehicle-location surveillance. Automated license plate reader systems affect policing, privacy, tourism, public trust, procurement, and the local budget. Those questions should be debated openly, with the contract, costs, camera locations, data rules, and sharing settings available for public inspection.

This briefing was prepared by Hopping Mad Games, LLC as a public-interest policy analysis based on public records, official materials, vendor publications, legislative documents, and reputable reporting available as of June 21, 2026. Where Trinidad-specific records are not yet public, this briefing identifies the records the city should release.

This document is a policy and public-interest analysis. It is not legal advice.

## Executive Summary

The deployment of automated license plate reader (ALPR) systems by Flock Safety has become a major public-policy issue across Colorado and the United States. ALPR cameras do not merely enforce a single traffic rule. They record license plates and vehicle attributes at scale, retain those observations for later search, and can be connected to broader law-enforcement sharing networks depending on local settings and policy.

For Trinidad, Colorado, the policy question is not only whether ALPR technology can help police investigate crime. The more important public question is whether the city has made, or should make, a durable surveillance decision without a full public record on cost, procurement, retention, sharing, cybersecurity, economic risk, and democratic consent.

Public records and reporting establish the broader context. Fort Collins voted in June 2026 to cancel its Flock contract and remove city-owned cameras. Santa Cruz voted in January 2026 to terminate its Flock contract. Denver added special safeguards after controversy over access to its Flock data. Colorado's ALPR-specific

privacy bill, SB26-070, failed during the 2026 session, leaving local governments responsible for setting their own rules.

Flock's own materials describe license plate readers as searchable systems that capture vehicle make, model, color, location, time, and license plate information. Flock also advertises real-time alerts, audit trails, hotlist sharing, transparency portals, and access to broader LPR networks. That is not just a camera purchase. It is a standing vehicle-location database.

The central fiscal issue is equally concrete. Flock describes its pricing as custom, but public Colorado agreements and vendor materials show an annual subscription model with recurring costs, retention settings, and network-access features. Until Trinidad publishes its own contract, residents should treat every cost estimate as a planning scenario and demand the actual order form, renewal language, cancellation terms, and data-sharing settings.

The central recommendation is that Trinidad residents and decision-makers should not evaluate this deployment solely as a police-equipment purchase. It should be evaluated as a data-governance decision with long-term fiscal, civil-liberties, cybersecurity, tourism, and public-trust consequences.

# 1. Governance and Public Consent

ALPR deployment often enters a municipality through ordinary procurement channels rather than through a public vote. That is legally different from a ballot initiative, but the social effect can be similar to a major public-policy change: a citywide data collection system appears before residents have had a meaningful opportunity to evaluate it.

The concern is not that every piece of police equipment must receive a citywide vote. The concern is that persistent location surveillance creates a standing public database. That kind of decision deserves public notice, publication of contract terms, data-sharing rules, retention settings, audit procedures, and a clear statement of what conduct or crimes the system is intended to address.

For Trinidad, the public record should answer:

- Who approved the ALPR deployment?
- What public meeting, staff memo, purchase order, or contract authorized it?
- How many cameras are deployed or planned?
- What is the initial term and renewal term?
- What is the total first-year and recurring annual cost?
- What agencies can query Trinidad-generated reads?
- What audit trail exists for searches?
- What local policy prevents immigration, reproductive-health, political-activity, or out-of-state dragnet uses?

If the city cannot answer these questions clearly, the deployment should pause until the public record is complete.

## 2. Technical Architecture and Data Risk

Flock Safety's public FAQ says its cameras capture more than a plate number. The company describes vehicle make, model, color, and resident/non-resident vehicle status as part of the data its products can produce. Other municipal descriptions of Flock ALPR systems state that cameras may capture additional identifying vehicle characteristics such as stickers, racks, or toolboxes.

Flock also states that it stores data for 30 days, or in adherence with local laws, and that customers own their data and decide who has access. That point matters. Local configuration and policy are not minor details; they determine whether a camera network is narrowly governed or broadly shared.

The risk is a "pattern of life" database: repeated observations can reconstruct where a vehicle appeared, when it appeared, and what routes it used. A single camera read may be mundane. A searchable history across many cameras can become sensitive location intelligence.

For Trinidad, the specific data-risk questions are:

- What retention period is configured?
- Can local officers export or preserve reads beyond the standard retention window?
- Is any statewide, regional, or national sharing enabled?
- Are external agency searches allowed by default or only by request?
- Are search reasons mandatory and audited?
- Can the city publish periodic transparency reports?

## 3. Colorado Legislative Context

Colorado considered ALPR and surveillance-technology limits in the 2026 session. The ALPR-specific bill was SB26-070. Official legislative materials describe it as a bill concerning protection of historical location information from government surveillance. The bill would have restricted government access to databases that reveal historical location information and would have restricted sharing outside a jurisdiction, subject to exceptions.

Public reporting indicates SB26-070 changed during the legislative process. Earlier versions included shorter data-retention limits, while later reporting described a one-month retention provision and a warrant requirement for access to historical ALPR data more than 72 hours after a crime. The bill did not become law; the official legislative status is "Lost."

That failure does not mean ALPR deployments are risk-free. It means local governments bear more responsibility. In the absence of a statewide standard, cities should create their own rules on retention, sharing, audits, public reporting, acceptable search purposes, and prohibited uses.

SB26-071 should not be confused with SB26-070. SB26-071 was a separate surveillance-technology measure, also marked "Lost" in the Colorado legislative record.

## 4. Fiscal Analysis and Opportunity Cost

Flock's current pricing page says pricing is custom and depends on the technology selected, the number of sensors, the software package, and other deployment details. The company describes its annual subscription as including hardware, cloud software, installation or onboarding, maintenance, upgrades, and support. Flock's public reinstall fee schedule lists installation-type charges, including a standard install fee.

Trinidad should publish its actual contract before asking residents to accept any claim about affordability. In the meantime, a public Colorado Flock agreement from Glenwood Springs shows the structure residents should expect to see: annual billing, a 30-day retention period, Flock Falcon cameras, add-on search features, state and nationwide license-plate lookup features, automatic renewal language, and a multi-year total. That kind of contract structure creates recurring obligations, not a one-time equipment purchase.

The following 15-camera scenario uses common public pricing signals and should be read as a budget-risk model until Trinidad releases its own order form:

Item	Assumption	Estimated amount
Annual camera subscription	15 cameras x \$3,000	\$45,000 per year
Standard installation	15 cameras x \$650	\$9,750 one time
Year 1 total	Subscription plus install	\$54,750
Five-year total	Year 1 plus four renewals	\$234,750
Ten-year total	Year 1 plus nine renewals	\$459,750

The city should publish the actual contract, renewal escalators, cancellation terms, installation charges, support obligations, grant offsets, and any related networking or power costs.

The fiscal policy issue is opportunity cost. If the city is facing revenue pressure, residents should be able to compare surveillance spending against public works, water infrastructure, road maintenance, staff retention, parks, housing, crisis response, and other local needs.

## 5. Corporate and Investor Context

Flock Safety is a privately held, venture-backed public-safety technology company. The company announced a \$275 million financing round and a \$7.5 billion valuation. Reporting and law-firm deal summaries identify Andreessen Horowitz, Greenoaks, Bedrock, Matrix Partners, Meritech, Founders Fund, and others as participants or backers in Flock financings.

Founders Fund, a venture capital firm co-founded by Peter Thiel, has invested in Flock Safety. Peter Thiel also co-founded Palantir. The established public issue is investor overlap across surveillance and public-safety technology markets. The question for Trinidad is not whether Palantir controls Flock; it is whether a rural Colorado community should convert local streets into privately operated data infrastructure without strong public rules.

Flock's own FAQ states that Flock does not partner with Palantir and that Palantir does not have access to Flock customer data. That does not remove the governance concern. Even without a Palantir partnership, the city is still buying into a venture-backed surveillance platform whose long-term value depends on widespread adoption, recurring subscriptions, and network effects.

The strongest critique is that municipalities are converting public streets into privately operated data infrastructure, and long-term dependence on a venture-backed vendor can reduce public control over public safety systems.

## 6. Cybersecurity and Reliability

Cybersecurity concerns are supported by public reporting. In January 2026, reporting and security-research publications described exposed Flock camera feeds and interfaces. The company characterized the issue as limited, while security researchers and journalists reported that some live feeds and administrative or debug surfaces were exposed without proper authentication.

The policy lesson is not that every Flock camera is always exposed. The lesson is that ALPR deployments create a high-value target. If a city installs persistent surveillance infrastructure, it must demand:

- Vendor security disclosures and incident notification terms.
- A public-facing vulnerability reporting path.
- Local configuration review.
- Strong authentication and least-privilege access.
- Audit logs for every search and export.
- Written incident-response procedures.
- A clear process for turning cameras off if the system is compromised.

For Trinidad, the city should publish the vendor security terms, the local access-control policy, the incident-notification process, and the person or office responsible for approving external data access.

## 7. Economic Risk for Tourism and Cannabis Commerce

Trinidad's border location matters. A city near a state line with outdoor recreation and legal cannabis commerce has a different risk profile than a city whose visitors are mostly local. Travelers from jurisdictions with different cannabis, immigration, reproductive-health, or protest-policing rules may be more sensitive to vehicle tracking.

The economic risk is reputational and practical. If visitors believe that entering Trinidad produces searchable vehicle-location data accessible beyond local policing, some may choose other destinations. A border city that depends on being welcoming should not dismiss that chilling effect as a niche privacy concern.

The city can reduce this risk by adopting and publishing strict limits:

- No sharing for immigration enforcement without judicial process.
- No sharing for lawful cannabis activity.
- No sharing for reproductive-health investigations.
- No sharing for political, protest, religious, journalistic, or associational activity.
- No out-of-state access except for serious crimes under a documented legal standard.
- Periodic public transparency reports.

Public trust is an economic asset. If Trinidad wants to remain a welcoming destination, the city should treat surveillance policy as part of economic-development policy.

## 8. Public Backlash and Comparable Precedents

Fort Collins, Colorado is a major in-state precedent. KUNC reported on June 19, 2026, that the Fort Collins City Council voted 6-1 to cancel its Flock contract, ordered data collection to stop immediately, and directed that 15 city-owned cameras be removed.

Santa Cruz, California is another relevant precedent. Santa Cruz Local reported that the Santa Cruz City Council voted 6-1 on January 13, 2026, to terminate its Flock contract, with concerns tied to privacy, trust, and immigration-enforcement risks.

Denver-area Flock controversy is also relevant. Colorado Newsline and ACLU of Colorado materials reported that Flock data connected to Denver-area cameras had been accessed through immigration-related national-search workflows. The safest phrasing is that local Flock-generated data can become reachable through broader networked search practices unless local policy and technical settings prevent it.

These precedents show that ALPR policy can change after public scrutiny. A contract does not end democratic debate.

## 9. Public Opinion

Public opinion evidence supports a simple point: people are uneasy about government surveillance and data collection when the rules are unclear.

YouGov's 2025 survey on privacy and government surveillance reported substantial concern about surveillance, including findings that many Americans believe surveillance has increased and that 47% say surveillance makes people less likely to express political views online.

Pew Research Center's 2019 privacy report found broad public concern about government and company data collection. Pew reported that majorities of Americans feel they have little control over data collected about them and that many believe the risks of data collection outweigh the benefits.

Those findings explain why ALPR deployments become politically volatile. Residents reasonably expect transparency and limits when government collects, searches, or shares personal data.

## 10. Recommended Trinidad Policy Actions

Recommended action begins with disclosure. Trinidad should publish the full Flock record before expanding, renewing, or defending the system.

Immediate records requests should seek:

- The Flock contract, purchase order, statement of work, amendments, and renewal terms.
- Camera count, camera locations, and installation dates.
- Cost details, funding source, grants, and recurring obligations.
- Retention settings.
- External sharing settings.
- User list and permission levels.
- Search audit logs and policy manuals.
- Data export rules.
- Any communications with Flock about immigration, out-of-state, or federal access.

Immediate local policy safeguards should include:

- A data-sharing ordinance.
- A retention limit shorter than the vendor default unless justified publicly.
- A ban on searches unrelated to a specific investigation.
- A ban on fishing expeditions and generalized travel monitoring.
- A requirement for written search reasons.
- Quarterly transparency reporting.
- Independent audit access.
- Clear penalties for misuse.
- A sunset clause requiring council reauthorization.

If the deployment cannot be justified under transparent rules, residents can pursue contract cancellation, a moratorium, or a ballot measure restricting city funding for passive ALPR surveillance.

## 11. Source List

- KUNC, "Fort Collins drops Flock surveillance, directs data collection to stop and cameras to be removed": <https://www.kunc.org/news/2026-06-19/fort-collins-drops-flock-surveillance-directs-data-collection-to-stop-and-cameras-to-be-removed>
- Colorado General Assembly, SB26-070: <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb26-070>
- Colorado General Assembly, SB26-071: <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb26-071>

- The Colorado Sun, SB70 surveillance technology coverage: <https://coloradosun.com/2026/04/21/senate-bill-70-colorado-surveillance-technology/>
- Colorado Newsline, Denver-area Flock immigration-search controversy: <https://coloradonewsline.com/2025/08/06/immigration-denver-flock-camera/>
- ACLU of Colorado, coalition concern about Flock cameras and ICE surveillance: <https://www.aclu-co.org/press-releases/coalition-of-civil-rights-and-advocacy-organizations-deeply-concerned-about-use-of-flock-cameras-for-ice-surveillance/>
- Santa Cruz Local, Santa Cruz Flock termination: <https://santacruzlocal.org/2026/01/13/santa-cruz-leaders-vote-to-terminate-contract-with-flock/>
- Flock Safety FAQ: <https://www.flocksafety.com/faq>
- Flock Safety LPR product description: <https://www.flocksafety.com/products/license-plate-readers>
- Flock Safety pricing: <https://www.flocksafety.com/pricing>
- Flock Safety reinstall fee schedule: <https://www.flocksafety.com/reinstall-fee-schedule>
- Glenwood Springs Police Department Flock agreement: <https://www.cogs.us/DocumentCenter/View/10549/Flock-Safety---Law-Enforcement-Agreement>
- Lafayette, Colorado Flock Safety ALPR Program: <https://lafayetteco.gov/4282/Flock-Safety-ALPR-Program>
- CBS Colorado, Denver Flock safeguards: <https://www.cbsnews.com/colorado/news/denver-contract-flock-camera-immigration-privacy/>
- Flock Safety funding announcement: <https://www.flocksafety.com/blog/flock-safety-secures-major-funding>
- Wilson Sonsini, Flock Safety financing: <https://www.wsgr.com/en/insights/wilson-sonsini-advises-flock-safety-on-dollar275-million-financing.html>
- The Colorado Sun / Gigafact, Flock and Palantir ownership claim check: <https://coloradosun.com/2026/02/13/are-flock-and-palantir-both-owned-by-billionaire-peter-thiel/>
- WFLX / InvestigateTV, exposed Flock feeds report: <https://www.wflx.com/2026/01/09/flock-safety-exposed-live-police-camera-feeds-internet-data-breach-company-says/>
- GainSec, Flock exposed feeds/security research: <https://gainsec.com/2026/01/09/bird-hunting-season-finding-67-live-camera-feeds-and-debug-web-interfaces-accidentally-exposed-by-flock-safety/>
- 404 Media, Flock camera exposure reporting: <https://www.404media.co/flock-exposed-its-ai-powered-cameras-to-the-internet-we-tracked-ourselves/>
- Electronic Frontier Foundation, ALPR vulnerabilities and public-safety risk: <https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2024/06/new-alpr-vulnerabilities-prove-mass-surveillance-public-safety-threat>
- Flock Safety, company-reported 10% crime claim: <https://www.flocksafety.com/blog/10-of-reported-crime-in-the-u-s-is-solved-using-flock-technology>
- YouGov, 2025 privacy and government surveillance polling: <https://yougov.com/en-us/articles/52425-what-americans-think-about-privacy-united-states-government-surveillance-in-2025-poll>
- Pew Research Center, Americans and Privacy: <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2019/11/15/americans-and-privacy-concerned-confused-and-feeling-lack-of-control-over-their-personal-information/>