

Surveillance in Asheville

The Asheville Police Department is increasingly using more and more surveillance technologies to monitor and track residents and visitors to the city and county.

These technologies are described as tools that will increase public safety but there is little, if any, evidence that surveillance can prevent crime or violence.

The following is an overview of a few but not all of the surveillance tools in use in Asheville. This includes automated license plate readers, drones, and the real time crime center.

Surveillance does not mean safety.

Join us in calling for an end to the growing surveillance system in Asheville and investment in public funds towards programs that have been proven to make everyone safer.

ALPRs



Automated License Plate Readers (ALPRs) are cameras that are either placed on the sides of roads or mounted to police cars. These cameras are always on, taking photos of every passing car, storing not just the license plate number but also the make, model, color, and other identifying features.

Nearly everything within the photo can be searched by police in a software, program, and data is widely shared across the country.

Companies that sell ALPRs include Flock Safety (currently being used by APD), Axon, and Motorola Solutions, among others.

There is no independent research that shows ALPRs have a meaningful impact on public safety.

RTIC/FUSUS

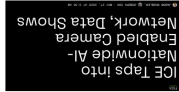
It's impossible to introduce a real-time information center and protect Black, brown, poor, trans, working class, and other communities from being surveilled by the police. In Ohio, police used Fusus to intensify surveillance of Black public-housing residents.

The use of Fusus means that the police will seek additional surveillance technologies because Fusus' power is maximized when more technologies are integrated into it.

Ultimately, Fusus does not prevent or deter crime or violence. Fusus and other surveillance tools are reactive, data-collecting technologies which have no proven ability to meaningfully improve public safety.

ALPRs

NEWS HEADLINES:
NC police errors with license plate cameras brought wrongful arrests, \$70K to women
Ketch police lieutenant arrested for using police technology to stalk wife



There are growing concerns about the use of these technologies around the country over the increasing risk of misuse, privacy violations, and wrongful arrests, along with dubious claims about how they benefit the community.

-ALPRs do NOT reduce crime
-ALPRs result in racist policing
-ALPRs are abused

-ALPRs lead to dangerous police encounters
-ALPRs put undocumented people at risk
-ALPRs collect & store ALL data, regardless of connection to crime

Visit deflock.org/what-is-an-alpr to learn more

RTIC/FUSUS

(Real Time Information Center & Fusus surveillance company based out of Atlanta)



The Asheville City Council approved using Fusus, owned by Axon, as the software and camera system to build out the city's real-time intelligence center.

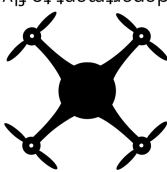
A real-time intelligence center is a place where police monitor all of the surveillance tools in place in their jurisdiction. Fusus provides two products to the police.

First, a software system that integrates all of the surveillance system into a map where the police can watch for alerts across the city.

Second, hardware which can integrate security cameras into the police's camera network.

This hardware allows private camera owners to integrate their cameras into the police network, expanding police surveillance outside of democratic control.

Drones



On Jan. 15 2025, the Asheville Police Department (APD) was granted a waiver by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The waiver allows the department to fly drones with no visual observer other than the pilot.

The APD obtained this waiver in the aftermath of Helene claiming that it was to help with cleanup, well beyond the point in time when any of this technology would be considered beneficial.

This technology has been seen by many people in the community, particularly during protest and gatherings for political action.

"When I was at the May Day Rally, there was one of their large drones flying overhead. When I was at a gathering of about 20 people discussing the force and neck-pinning used against Devon Whittle? Drone overhead. When the city and county teachers associations gathered to demand higher pay? Drone overhead."

-Dan Pudlo in a letter to the Mountain Xpress

Asheville Surveillance

A Quick Guide to What is Here in Our City: ALPRs, Drones, and FUSUS



CAMS (Communities Against Mass Surveillance)