ENHANCING PUBLIC SAFETY IN APPLETON

The Role of Flock Safety Cameras

A Data Driven, Community-Focused Public Safety Tool

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Appleton Police Department

PURPOSE OF THIS PRESENTATION

- Explain what Flock Cameras are and how they are used
- Share Appleton-specific results and benefits
- Address privacy, civil liberties, and oversight
- Provide clear considerations for future use or expansion

PUBLIC SAFETY CHALLENGES FACING THE CITY OF APPLETON

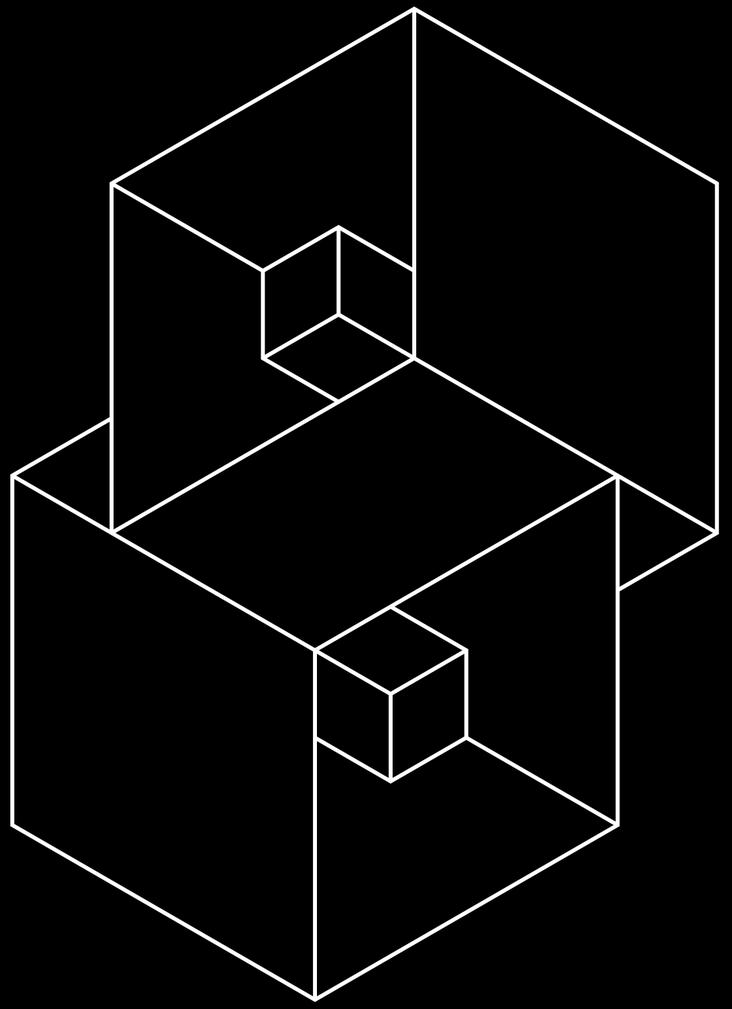
- Increasing mobility of crime (stolen vehicles, hit and run, retail theft, fraud, weapons offenses)
- Crime crossing city and county boundaries
- Limited officer staffing compared to growth
- Flock is a force multiplier
- Need for faster investigative leads
- Approximately 70% to 80% of all crimes involve a vehicle in some capacity

WHAT ARE FLOCK SAFETY CAMERAS?

- Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) technology
- Captures vehicle license plates and basic vehicle characteristics
- Placed in public rights-of-way
- Records only what is visible to the public

WHAT FLOCK SAFETY CAMERAS ARE NOT?

- No facial recognition
- No tracking of people
- No continuous surveillance
- No tracking of speed or traffic violations



HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS

1. Camera captures a vehicle image
2. Plate number and vehicle descriptors are logged
3. Officers search by objective criteria (plate, color, vehicle type, distinguishable feature)
4. Alerts can be created for stolen vehicles or BOLOs
5. Data auto-deletes after a set retention period unless needed for evidence purposes

APPLETON'S PILOT PROGRAM: OVERVIEW

- **29** Flock cameras deployed from 5/1/22 to 7/25/23
- **183** verified successes from the pilot program

- <u>Case successes during pilot:</u>
- Hit and Run (30 cases solved during pilot)
- Retail theft (22 cases solved during pilot)
- Domestic violence (5 arrests made during pilot)
- Burglary
- Weapons complaints
- Fraud
- Recovery of stolen vehicles (30 vehicles recovered during the pilot alone)

REAL-WORLD IMPACT

- Faster identification of suspect vehicles
- Reduced investigative time
- Increased case clearance rates
- Improved victim outcomes
- Evidence that stands up in court
- A photograph of a vehicle is more reliable than witness testimony

A FORCE MULTIPLIER FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

- Cameras work 24/7 without overtime costs
- Allows our officers to dedicate more time to proactive policing
- Reduces manual video review and guesswork
- Supports proactive/community policing without increasing staff

REGIONAL AND INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

- Crimes don’t stop at city borders (ATM hook and chain burglaries/mail thefts/fraud rings)
- Enhanced regional public safety
- Flock allows secure data sharing with:
- Neighboring cities
- County and State agencies
- Appleton shares data with Wisconsin law enforcement agencies

COST EFFECTIVENESS

- Annual subscription per camera vs. personnel costs
- Lower long-term cost than adding staff
- Predictable budgeting
- Minimal infrastructure investment

PRIVACY PROTECTIONS BUILT INTO THE SYSTEM

- No facial recognition
- No personal identity data
- Searches require a legitimate law-enforcement purpose
- Access is limited to trained personnel
- All searches are logged and auditable
- Recent arrest of an Officer misusing the system is an example of accountability

APPLETON PD POLICIES AND OVERSIGHT

- Written policy governing camera use
- Defined data retention period
- Supervisor review of access
- Audit logs available for review
- Discipline for misuse
- Transparency portal will be included on our website
- Maintain strict privacy and audit policies

COMPARISON TO OTHER CITIES

- Many Wisconsin municipalities use ALPR technology
- Demonstrated successes in:
- Rapid stolen vehicle recovery
- Identifying/locating suspects in violent crimes
- Locating missing persons
- Identifying/locating suspects in traffic offenses (hit and run/fleeing)
- Identifying/locating suspects in misdemeanor and property offenses

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Flock cameras improve public safety outcomes
- Officers can quickly identify or eliminate individuals as a suspect in crime
- Cost-effective and efficient investigative tool
- Strong privacy safeguards are already in place
- Proven benefits have already been experienced in the City of Appleton (Cases from homicide to retail theft)

APPLETON CASE STUDY #1

- On 11/15/22, APD investigators began a homicide investigation in the 700 block of W. Summer St.
- On that day, investigators identified a possible suspect and a vehicle he was believed to be operating
- Flock was used to determine that the vehicle had hit a camera in Green Bay
- The vehicle was entered as stolen with caution indicators due to the homicide offense. Had the vehicle passed any Flock Cameras after that point police would have been alerted
- Investigators were able to coordinate with Green Bay Police, who quickly located the vehicle in the neighborhood near where it had passed a flock camera. The vehicle was impounded, preserving any potential evidence and potentially removing an option for the suspect to evade apprehension
- The location of the vehicle opened the door to other investigative leads within that neighborhood that led to the location of the suspect. He was taken into custody on 11/20/22

APPLETON CASE STUDY #2

- In June of 2025, APD investigators began a sexual assault investigation involving a child victim
- Investigators identified a suspect but had been unable to locate him
- Investigators from the APD Special Investigations Unit began canvassing bars and restaurants, contacting known associates of the suspect
- Investigators were able to obtain a license plate for a vehicle the suspect was in possession of
- APD crime analyst entered that license plate into Flock, and afterwards was able to use traditional traffic cameras to track the suspect vehicle
- Investigators were able to locate and surveil the suspect vehicle
- The suspect entered the vehicle as it was under surveillance and was taken into custody
- At the time the suspect was taken into custody, he had a very large amount of cash on his person and evidence suggested that he intended to flee the country

APPLETON CASE STUDY #3

- On 11/05/2025 Officer Christensen was dispatched to the red parking ramp for a hit and run accident
- The victim’s vehicle was unoccupied at the time of the crash and there was no suspect information it appeared that the suspect had backed into the victim’s vehicle
- Officer Christensen was able to view CCTV footage from the parking ramp exit and observed several vehicles with rear-end damage leaving around the time of the crash
- Officer Christensen was able to utilize Flock Cameras to find that those vehicles had the same damage prior to the crash and could not have been suspects
- Without the use of Flock cameras Officer Christensen would have had to spend time tracking down owners of each of those vehicles to question their involvement
- The case was unsolved, but valuable investigative time was saved with Flock

APPLETON CASE STUDY #4

- On 12/24/2025, Officer Looker received a Flock alert regarding a vehicle that was frequently operated by a suspect with a warrant for battery and disorderly conduct
- Appleton Officers had created the Alert as they had not had success in locating the suspect
- Officer Looker was able to respond quickly to the area, locate the vehicle, and observe the suspect driving
- Officer Looker conducted a traffic stop on the vehicle and was able to take the suspect into custody for his warrant without incident
- The suspect was also cited for operating with a suspended driver’s license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