LICENSE PLATE READERS (LPR)

What is the technology?

LPR is a combination of hardware and software used for capturing and monitoring images of license plates. High definition cameras are posted at various intersections throughout the City to assist SDOT traffic engineers in decreasing travel times across the City.

Why do we use the technology?

Measuring travel time is a key metric for understanding and mitigating issues related to urban traffic congestion. LPR allows SDOT to quickly determine travel times for system engineering, traffic planning, and public distribution purposes.

Collection

LPR captures images of license plates as they move into view. The images are put through software that reports the license plate number to the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) with a time stamp, plate number, LPR camera channel, and station (intersection) identifier. WSDOT processes the travel time between intersections and sends the information back to SDOT.

Use

The information collected from license plate readers is used to calculate average travel time and delays. This data allows traffic engineers to improve traffic signal timing and provide information to travelers about expected delays. Travel time data may be displayed on electronic road signs, on major streets.

The open comment period for this technology is currently underway. You can provide comments to **Seattle.gov/Surveillance**.

All comments will be included in the Surveillance Impact Report on this technology and submitted to Council.

If you would like to provide feedback outside of the open comment period, please submit them directly to City Council.

Protections

SDOT's LPR systems are strictly built to monitor traffic flow and travel time. License plate numbers are immediately deleted upon completion of the travel time calculation. The data SDOT receives from WSDOT is aggregated and accessed only by SDOT staff. At no point does SDOT receive individual license plate numbers.

Seattle Department of Transportation