Takoma Park LPR Program

(License Plate Reader)

What is an LPR?

License plate readers (or **LPR cameras**) are cameras which can extract numbers and letters from a license plate using infrared illuminators or ambient lighting.

What does an LPR system do?

LPR systems will read license plates onto a user's MDC (Mobile Data Computer) and compare it to a hotlist which is updated daily.

What is on a hotlist?

A hotlist includes stolen vehicles, felony vehicles, vehicles with flags through the MVA (i.e suspended registration, no insurance…), vehicles associated with amber alerts and silver alerts, and vehicles associated with other missing persons. The hotlist is updated twice daily and stored by the Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center (MCAC).

What happens if an officer receives a "hit" on an LPR?

The officer MUST confirm the information provided by the LPR either via MDC or though the communications center/dispatcher before taking any action.

Who can use an LPR?

Currently, only officers that have been through an approved LPR training hosted by the Maryland State Police can use an LPR system. Once certified by an MSP instructor, an officer will receive a username and password.

What information is captured when a license plate is read?

A picture of the license plate, date, time, camera serial number, and location information from when the tag was read.

What happens to the information gathered?

All information to include photo of license plate and all associated metadata is uploaded to MCAC Operations Center via an encrypted VPN (Virtual Private Network). The data is then stored and maintained at MCAC Operations Center on a server independent of any other law enforcement databases.

How is the data used?

The Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center has, as one of its core missions, the sharing of information, therefore assisting law enforcement agencies in the fulfillment of their duties.

MCAC's Operation Center is the statewide central repository for license plate reader data. LPR data may be used for but not limited to the following purposes:

- Crime analysis
- To alert law enforcement that a license plate number is on a list of targeted license plate number (hotlist) or is related to a criminal investigation and is found in the LPR database
- To identify the movement of vehicles operated by subjects currently under an open criminal investigation.

What is the goal of the LPR program?

The goal of the LPR program is to collect and store vehicle license plate information in an effort to increase the detection of stolen vehicles, stolen license plates, felony vehicles, missing persons, and aid criminal investigations and prosecutions of other crimes involving vehicles that impact the safety of Maryland's citizens

When can LPR data be searched?

LPR data can only be searched and disseminated only if there is legal a legal process requiring these actions or there is reasonable suspicion that an individual is involved in criminal conductor activity and the information is relevant to that criminal conduct or activity and the requestor has a legitimate reason to know.

How long are records kept?

All LPR data provided to MCAC will be stored on a server at MCAC Operations Center for a period not to exceed one year. After the one-year period the data will be purged unless there is reason to believe the data will become evidence. Agencies requiring data to be stored longer than 1 year must make a formal request to MCAC to extend retention of the files. Each request must include the need for extended retention, the circumstances surrounding the case, the requesting agencies case number, and a point of contact within the agency. MCAC reserves the right to grant or deny any agency requests based on the information provided.

How many LPR systems does Takoma Park currently have?

The Takoma Park Police Department currently has 4 LPR systems. 1 stationary LPR system in the mobile electronic signboard that is inoperable and 3 mobile vehicle mounted systems which only 1 is currently in working operation. Each system was purchased 8-10 years ago.