



Division of Police Memorandum

Dorothy A. Todd, Chief of Police

TO: Council Members, City of Cleveland

FROM: Dorothy A. Todd, Chief of Police *DAT*

SUBJECT: Technology Division of Police **DATE:** June 26, 2026

I want to be clear: I am not saying "yes" to any particular vendor. I am saying yes to technology. I am saying yes to license plate readers and other tools that help keep our community safe. Right now, we need a temporary contract in place to allow us the time necessary to evaluate what is best moving forward for the safety of our residents and for the men and women of the Cleveland Division of Police.

If you or a member of your family has ever been the victim of a crime, your first expectation is that the offender will be brought to justice. Too often, investigators encounter a lack of cooperation from witnesses or individuals in the area. In many cases, that reluctance stems from fear of retaliation. Technology helps bridge those gaps and provides investigators with critical leads that might otherwise never exist.

Without technology, including license plate readers, we would not have achieved a 78% homicide clearance rate this year. We would not have solved cases involving violent offenders, including the individual responsible for shooting a dart gun in the Second District, numerous murders and violent crimes, and the offender who brutally murdered Officer Shane Bartek. These are only a few examples. There are countless cases where technology has helped us identify suspects, protect victims, and prevent additional crimes.

My concern is simple: without these tools, violent offenders will remain on the streets longer, placing more citizens at risk of becoming victims. The Cleveland Division of Police and the community we serve cannot afford a lapse in license plate reader services, especially during one of the busiest times of the year. Technology is used every day, in every district, and in countless investigations. It is a tool that helps keep our community safe and supports the safety of our officers.

To those advocating against license plate readers and other investigative technologies, I would ask: if you or an immediate family member were the victim of a violent crime, would you expect law enforcement to use every lawful tool available to bring the offender to justice? I believe most people would answer yes.



Division of Police Memorandum

Dorothy A. Todd, Chief of Police

As police officers, one of the most difficult responsibilities we have is notifying families when a loved one has been seriously injured or tragically killed. When we stand before those families, we make a promise that we will do everything within our power to hold the

responsible person accountable. Without technology, my fear is that we will be forced to break that promise more often.

We have policies in place governing the lawful use of technology, along with accountability measures for anyone who violates those policies. These tools are not used without oversight. They are used responsibly, legally, and for the purpose of protecting our community.

Unfortunately, this discussion has become a political debate rather than a conversation about public safety. As Chief of Police, I am not a politician. The Cleveland Division of Police should not be a part of politics. We are law enforcement professionals, and we simply want the tools necessary to do our jobs as effectively as possible. I respectfully ask that the Division of Police be kept out of political debates and that this conversation return to its proper focus: public safety.

I also want to recognize and thank the men and women of the Cleveland Division of Police for their hard work, dedication, and sacrifice. Too often, they do not receive the recognition they deserve. They are committed to keeping our neighborhoods safe. They are ordinary people who took an oath to serve others and make our city a better place for everyone.

We are frequently asked for examples of how technology and license plate readers are used. The reality is that the question is so broad that it is difficult to provide a complete answer. Technology is used all day, every day, in virtually every aspect of policing—from investigating traffic crashes, hit-skip incidents, and stolen vehicles to solving violent crimes, locating missing persons, and conducting homicide investigations.

This conversation should not be about politics. It should be about public safety, accountability, and ensuring that law enforcement has the lawful tools necessary to protect the people of Cleveland.

Dorothy A. Todd
Chief of Police