

Technology Surveillance in Oakland

Did you know that Oakland recently passed a Surveillance Technology Ordinance?

At their May 15th meeting, Oakland City Council unanimously approved the Surveillance Technology Ordinance. You can read the ordinance text [here](#).

This is unique legislation and the first of its kind in the country. The ordinance requires all city departments to submit a technology impact report before purchasing surveillance technology. It also requires a Surveillance Use Policy to be submitted to the Privacy Advisory Commission. Finally, if the Privacy Advisory Commission approves the policy, it must also be adopted by City Council before the requested technologies can be used. The ordinance covers technologies such as cell phone trackers, license plate readers, facial recognition software, body worn cameras, and cameras used in city buildings and on city streets. If the technology is approved by City Council, an Annual Surveillance Report must also be submitted which describes, among many other details, how the technology was used, how the data was shared, and information about any data breaches.

The Privacy Advisory Commission (PAC) was created in 2015. You can learn more about the Privacy Advisory Commission at [this site](#). The purpose of the PAC, as listed on their website, is “To provide advice to the city of Oakland on best practices to protect Oaklanders’ privacy rights in connection with the city’s purchase and use of surveillance equipment and other technology that collects or stores our data.”

To learn more about digital surveillance check out Cyrus Farivar’s new book *Habeas Data*, which includes a section on Oakland. Many other books are available on the topic by searching on the terms “digital surveillance” in [OPL’s encore catalog](#). You can also read more about Oakland’s Surveillance Technology Ordinance as well as surveillance technologies that are used in California and throughout the country on the [ACLU’s Technology and Civil Liberties webpage](#).

To disseminate this information to patrons I would post a blog entry on our website.