



Date: February 6, 2024
To: City Council
From: Brian S. Smith, *Police Chief*
Subject: Washington Department of Commerce Grant Acceptance

Summary: The Police Department has received a preliminary grant award of \$50,000.00 as a part of a pursuit prevention initiative from the Washington State Department of Commerce Office of Firearm Safety and Violence Prevention. The award will allow the Police Department to purchase and deploy two automated license plate reader devices and purchase and deploy a modern aerial drone device. The Police Department applied for the funds through a competitive process. Both items will have the potential to improve outcomes during vehicular pursuits and during fugitive apprehension by improving the information available to responding officers.

Funding: Cost for the equipment is 100 percent grant funded.

Recommendation:

1. Approve a grant agreement with the Washington Department of Commerce for the purchase and deployment of the equipment and expenditure of \$50,000.00.
2. Authorize the City Manager to sign and execute the grant agreement and approve and execute the final purchase documents to complete the purchase of the equipment specified in the grant and to make minor modifications as necessary.

Background / Analysis: Eighteen police department or sheriff's offices in Washington were recently notified by the Washington Department of Commerce of awards in the Law Enforcement Vehicle Pursuit Technology Grant Program.

The Police Department has one aerial drone and one FAA certified drone pilot. The equipment was purchased over 5 years ago and lacks some of the distance and longevity capability needed when attempting to apprehend a fleeing suspect. Product development has also made this unit somewhat obsolete. The drone authorized in this Department of Commerce grant would greatly improve our capability in several areas and will cost less than \$18,000.00.

Automated license plate reader devices also improve law enforcement capability when attempting to locate and apprehend fleeing suspects and fugitives from justice. The equipment authorized by the grant would be pole mounted and cover both directions of travel on the east and west sides of the City. The equipment would also have the capability to detect a particular make and model of vehicle as well as a particular license plate. Area containment during a critical incident could be accomplished by the license plate reader devices and / or the aerial drone versus an officer posted at the location, thus freeing up resources. End users would also be notified when a stolen vehicle or vehicles associated with other alerts pass through the system. There is also the capability to link the system with other systems operated by WA State Patrol.

The Police Department has proposed a formal end user partnership with the Lower Elwha Police for the automated license plate reader system. This will likely require an additional agreement, training and coordination.

The Clallam County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) currently has two mobile license plate reader devices in use. When it has been deployed it has been very helpful in the detection, location and apprehension of criminal suspects. CCSO and the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office also have aerial drones. Both types of equipment have limitations that will be in part addressed by the additional equipment deployed by the Police Department.

Use of the equipment provided by the grant during vehicular pursuits will in some instances reduce the need of the law enforcement officers to directly engage the suspects.

Funding: The Department application process required agencies to identify specific equipment that could be purchased and deployed for the authorized amount. The Police Department has identified two vendors who have existing contracts that staff believes would allow the Police Department to utilize those contracts for purchase. The equipment purchase cost of up to \$50,000 will be reimbursed by the Department of Commerce.