

Wynnedale Background Document on License Plate Reader

Dear Wynnedale Residents,

On August 20, 2024, the Wynnedale Town Council considered a proposal from the Safety & Security Task Force for the installation of license plate readers in Wynnedale. As part of its consideration, the Town Council has directed the Safety & Security Task Force to obtain feedback from Wynnedale residents to factor into the Town Council's ultimate consideration of the proposal.

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Background:

How did this discussion on License Plate Readers begin?

Safety and security in Wynnedale has been a topic of discussion for some time now amongst several of the Town's residents. Over the years, there have been anecdotal reports of reckless driving, mail theft, car break-ins, the sound of gunshots, and other safety and security incidents of concern to the residents.

At its August 15, 2023 meeting, the Town Council discussed two events, including an attempted break-in where a truck window was smashed and a drive-by shooting in which six shots were fired at the corner of Cold Spring Road and Wynnedale Road. The latter incident occurred in front of the respective homes of Libby and Eddie Goodknight and Ann Hildner, who is now President of the Town Council. As memorialized in the minutes for the August 15, 2023 meeting, the Town Council unanimously approved the formation of a "committee of Wynnedale citizens to explore" all security options in the Town, including cameras and the elimination of entrances. See <https://www.wynnedale.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Town-Council-8-15-23-Minutes.pdf>. Andy Hawickhorst, then a member of the Town Council, agreed to work with this committee of volunteers and report its findings back to the Town Council.

The committee initially consisted of Andy Hawickhorst, Tammy Callahan, Heather Fortune, Libby Goodknight, and Gene Lindley. As interest in safety and security measures in Wynnedale has grown, the committee now operates as a subcommittee (the "LPR subcommittee") of a broader Safety & Security Task Force that also includes Darwin Bostrom, Linda Clarke, Mel Harder, John Kincaid, Kevin Petsche, Aaron Schmoll, and David Vass. Following the November 2023 election, Judy Gruber replaced Andy Hawickhorst as the Town Council member involved in these activities.

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The primary focus of the LPR subcommittee has been the exploration of license plate readers as a safety and security option in Wynnedale. The focus of the LPR subcommittee complements the work of the Safety & Security Task Force, which has been evaluating a wider range of safety and security measures, including lighting, gates, speed humps, closing off entrances, and neighborhood crime watch initiatives.

Due Diligence:

1. Resident Safety and Security Survey.

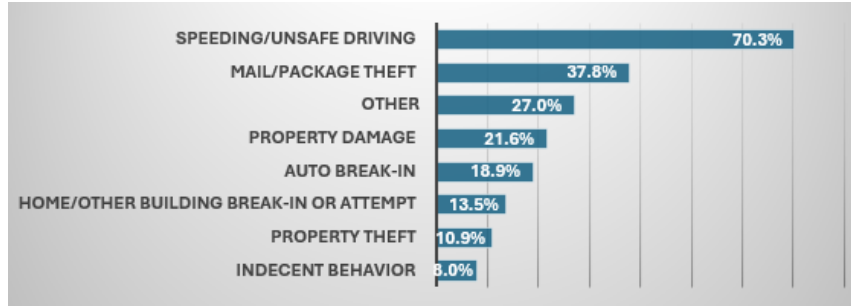
As a starting point for the efforts of the LPR subcommittee and Safety & Security Task Force, it was important to solicit feedback from the residents of Wynnedale to determine the extent of any problems or concerns before considering significant financial commitments by the Town. To that end, the LPR subcommittee developed a safety and security survey, and the Town Council unanimously approved sending the survey to all residents of Wynnedale in early 2024. See <https://www.wynnedale.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Wynnedale-Town-Council-Mtg.-minutes-Feb.-13-2024.docx.pdf>; https://www.wynnedale.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Wynnedale-Town-Council-Minutes-March-12-2024_final.pdf.

The survey invited and produced seven new members of the Safety & Security Task Force.¹ Out of 94 households in Wynnedale, 62 households responded to the survey. The highlights from the survey results include the following:

- The top two concerns were speeding/unsafe driving (70.3%) and mail theft (37.8%).
- Other concerns included hearing gunshots at night, cut-through driving in the neighborhood, driving through stop signs, multiple car wrecks and unsafe driving (mainly on Cold Spring Road), and damage to mailboxes, fences, and other property on Cold Spring Road and Knollton Road from moving cars.
- While most survey responders had already taken some form of extra security action on their property, 55.7% had experienced or witnessed crime in Wynnedale in the last four years. The types of incidents include:

¹ No residents of North Wynnedale have expressed an interest in joining the Safety & Security Task Force.

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- 59% of the survey responders felt that Wynnedale should take action to deter crime, with 31% neither agreeing nor disagreeing.
- 55.8% of the survey responders felt that Wynnedale should take action to increase pedestrian and traffic safety, with 29.5% neither agreeing nor disagreeing.
- Suggestions from the survey results included adding safe walking paths, installing speed bumps/humps, deterring outside traffic from cutting through the neighborhood, signage for cameras, gates, barriers at certain entrances/exits to the neighborhood, blinking speed notification signs, and neighborhood speed patrols.

2. Crime Statistics.

In addition to reviewing the survey results, the LPR subcommittee and Safety & Security Task Force evaluated crime statistics from a number of publicly-available data sources. This included local neighborhood SCOUT crime data and the SAVI Crime Community Profiles for Wynnedale and surrounding neighborhoods. While crime within the limits of Wynnedale proper is relatively low, the Town is surrounded by areas with significant incidents of crime as documented daily through IMPD call data, spotcrime.com, city protect incident map, the neighborhood SCOUT web site, and others.

3. Research on License Plate Readers.

It is important to correct any misunderstanding that license plate readers capture live video stream of neighborhoods. They do not. Rather, license plate readers take a still snapshot of the license plate and the vehicle as it is entering or exiting the neighborhood. The LPR subcommittee has done extensive due diligence exploring the feasibility and desirability of installing license plate readers as a safety and security option in Wynnedale. That due diligence has included:

- Researching the literature, news publications, and white papers on license plate readers.
- Researching information on Flock Safety, the leading manufacturer of license plate readers and the one most commonly utilized by law enforcement, including IMPD.

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- Participating in multiple meetings with representatives of Flock to understand the equipment, installation process, costs, technology and data, contract terms, and monitoring obligations.
- Participating in an onsite neighborhood walkthrough with a Flock representative.
- Interviewing a current Flock customer, the homeowners' association of a 1,400 house neighborhood located in North Carolina.
- Speaking with representatives of IMPD to understand how IMPD uses its own license plate readers and interfaces with the license plate readers of other neighborhoods and communities, including IMPD's specific experience with Flock.
- Considering Motorola, another license plate reader manufacturer.
- Researching grant opportunities as an alternative funding source for license plate readers. There are currently no grant sources available in 2024 in this category with criteria that Wynnedale could meet.
- Solar powered LPR are possible for north Wynnedale because of available sun for camera placement. Rechargeable battery powered LPR units will be used in south Wynnedale due to shade in targeted areas.

Benefits of Proposal:

The LPR subcommittee has spent a significant amount of time evaluating and debating a proposal for the installation of license plate readers as a safety and security measure in Wynnedale. The LPR subcommittee, supported by the full Safety & Security Task Force, believes the installation of license plate readers will **benefit the community as follows:**

Potential visible deterrence, as LPR signage and license plate readers could deter cut-through traffic and prevent criminals from entering the neighborhood. While the license plate readers would not capture criminals entering or exiting the neighborhood on foot, it seems – given our location within Indianapolis – that most concerns relate to individuals driving in and out of the neighborhood.
Potential increased safety in terms of the reduction of reckless and other unsafe driving.
Potential reduction in crime.
Faster reaction time in the event of a safety or security incident, as IMPD prioritizes assistance and can help if the Town has license plate data.
Potential recovery of stolen property and/or arrest of the perpetrator, as license plate readers allow for better pinpointing of date and time of an incident.
All license plate readers are compared against a “hot list” with local police for stolen vehicles and amber alerts.
Maintaining our own data would allow “self-service” access to data through two Town Council-authorized administrators. Notably, access to data would only be allowed pursuant to Town Council-approved requests or law enforcement reported incidents, so as to prevent abuse and irresponsible use and access to data. Data is purged by a rolling 30 day rule.

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As a practical matter, license plate readers would make Wynnedale a more difficult target for criminals in vehicles.
Improved sense of security.
Increased property values and desirability of the neighborhood, which is good for resale.
Decreased road maintenance, wear, and tear with less traffic from non-residents of Wynnedale who use the neighborhood to cut-through.
Although perimeter households may not appear to have as much benefit with inbound readers at 7 entrances, the enhanced safety and overall value in neighborhood affects all households, 34 in north Wynnedale and 60 in south Wynnedale.

Recommendation:

The Safety & Security Task Force has proposed to install license plate readers as follows:

- Installation and a two-year service contract for 7 cameras (4 for South Wynnedale and 3 for North Wynnedale).
- First year costs of \$20,050. This includes \$650 x3 per camera installation for north Wynnedale with solar power; \$150 x4 per camera installation for south Wynnedale plus electrician charge (estimated to be \$500-\$2000 each) to connect to existing light posts for power. Due to mature trees blocking adequate sun for a solar panel, these camera batteries need to recharge at night through existing light posts.
- Second year costs of \$17,500 plus monthly electric utility cost to recharge 4 camera batteries nightly.

Close Tab on this document to return to Google Survey.