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Surveillance cameras in Moraga confirmed for the end of the year

By Sophie Braccini



Town receives \$60,000 check for security cameras, from left: Kymberleigh Korpus, Tom Schnurr, Teresa Onoda, Bob Fritzky, Chief Jon King, Roger Wykle and Dave Trotter. Photo Andy Scheck

Chief of Police Jon King confirmed after receiving a \$60,000 check from the Moraga Community Foundation that his team would install six new security cameras on Moraga's busy traffic arterials before the end of the year. One is already in use on Moraga Way. The chief said, during the Sept. 13 Moraga Town Council meeting when the check was accepted by the council, that along with the cameras installed in Lafayette and Orinda, the six new license plate readers and video cameras will be sufficient to cover suspicious vehicle spotting.

The chief detailed after the meeting that the system will not be part of a larger connected database that can identify stolen and suspicious vehicles and send automated alerts to officers. King said that a number of town residents did not want to have the local data travel on the internet. He adds that the online system is costly, but that Moraga will update its system with data regarding suspect cars. Also, when a vehicle suspected to be implicated in a crime is identified, the information can be transmitted orally to surrounding agencies.

King would not divulge where exactly the cameras will be installed, but he explained that signs will be placed at the entrances to the town saying that active camera systems are in use. He believes it can be a deterrent to crime.

Moraga police will use the data, license plate reader and videos only in connection with active investigations. The existing camera was recently used to retrieve a stolen vehicle and identify the perpetrators. King recounts how his officers were given the time of the theft and how the license plate reader was not able to read anything.

"The license plate had been bent and was not readable," says King, "so the puzzled officers looked at the video that is installed alongside the plate reader and saw the vehicle." On the video, a second vehicle following the stolen one and driven by an accomplice was also identified. The information led to an arrest.

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