



July 14, 2008

Chico City Council
City of Chico
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AMERICAN CIVIL
LIBERTIES UNION OF
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA
CHICO CHAPTER
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Re: Item

Dear Members of the Council:

The ACLU Chico Chapter is, as always, concerned with any intrusion into any person's private life.

A few months ago, we became aware that the City of Chico and the Chico Police Department were studying the use of optical scanning technology to scan license plates of parked vehicles in downtown Chico for the purpose of enforcing parking rules and to apprehend "scofflaw" violators. This technology was discussed in the March 11, 2008 Internal Affairs Committee. In that meeting, Tom Varga's "Downtown Parking Issues" report section II(B) referred to a February 27, 2008 police report by Chico Police Sergeant George Laver that described a new Canadian technology marketed by Genetec and known as Autovu. This Autovu technology was demonstrated to the City Staff in 2007. Autovu would upload license plate data into a police database that, as Sergeant Laver wrote, "actively searches for 'scofflaw' violators."

The Autovu system would pass the license plate number across the City of Chico's Internet Protocol network that would actively track the location and identity of the vehicle. Autovu can also be integrated with surveillance cameras (similar to the cameras mounted all over Chico) to track our movements. Frankly, the possibilities of this intrusive surveillance system are endless and very troubling. The potential for inadvertent loss and theft of information, for unreasonable intrusion into our private lives, for

unauthorized disclosure of this information, and other violations of our constitutional rights abound. And, to what end?

Accordingly, it is the position of the Board of Directors of the Chico Chapter of the ACLU that any collection of the license plate data and the integration of this information into any vehicle owner database for any purpose constitutes an unreasonable search of the private records of any person who might venture to downtown Chico in a vehicle and park. We ask that the City of Chico categorically reject the Autovu technology or any similar technology that would intrude upon our privacy.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

ACLU of Northern California Chico Chapter

William A. Sheridan
Board Chairperson

cc: Shayna Gellender, ACLU-NC