



## **Update to York SafeNet Proposal October 2025**

The proposal to York City Council requesting access to City infrastructure for building the public safety camera network was originally submitted for the September 24th meeting. We offer this supplemental packet to provide updates and additional information to Council and the public.

### **Trust and Transparency**

Since its inception, the initiative, which has grown into York SafeNet, has been undertaken by members of the community that care deeply about the safety and prosperity of York and have a deep respect for its residents. Our board members and collaborators live, work, learn, and play here in York, and have dedicated much of their lives to improving the community. Our intent is to improve public safety for all, and to operate with transparency and accountability. We have sought to demonstrate this in good faith by:

- Working collaboratively with Council over the past two years, recognizing their role in this project.
- Diligently responding to the four items requested by Council, which includes the creation of a collaborative governance structure, proactively drafting network policies, making public a map of camera locations, and conducting a funding feasibility study.
- Engaging a diverse coalition of those that represent both proponents and critics of the network and incorporating their input.

### **Responding to Community Concerns**

While our team has been at work for years on this concept, we realize that many in the community are just learning about our work. Understandably, concerns have been voiced and we have listened attentively. Camera surveillance is already being used around the country and in our own community. One of our goals in undertaking this work as a public-private partnership is to make sure that the technology is used for the common good in York while ensuring the necessary safeguards are put in place so that citizen's rights are protected. We believe the proposed governance structure is the most efficient for maintaining transparency and accountability.

We have taken the time to meet with and engage some of the leading voices of concern. In response, we have revised our policies and published answers in a frequently asked questions document. We are committed to continue to work collaboratively with the community as the process of building this network continues.



## **Is the Investment Worth It?**

Crime is costly to York City. The [Rand Study](#) estimates that the average homicide costs \$66,000 in judicial costs alone and up to \$12.9 million dollars per homicide in total societal costs, which count victim services, economic impact, etc. (dollar figures are adjusted for inflation). Preventing violent crime in our community has a significant social and financial benefit.

A camera network that provides evidence to clear citizens of charges, or to prove them guilty of crime, also has the potential to bring a high level of efficiency to York City's police operations. This would save City taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars per year and allow the City to deploy funding to other needed areas, even as fiscal concerns continue to be a persistent issue.

At the County level, the judicial system would also benefit from added efficiencies. Tim Miller, Executive Director of Lancaster's camera network, [recently estimated](#) that their system saves Lancaster County taxpayers \$2 million dollars per year.

While the cost of building and sustaining the camera network is not insignificant, the member nonprofit model allows costs to be shared so that the City, County, or any other single entity are not saddled with the total cost.

## **Our Request**

York SafeNet is not a plan that a small group of people are trying to push on the City and its citizens. Rather, it represents the culmination of years of work and financial contributions from people and organizations who live in, and love York City. We offer to undertake the construction of this network as a service and support to a City that we love, recognizing that the City alone does not likely have the resources to do this.

This proposal requests access to basic city infrastructure for construction purposes. As a next step, we will bring together funders from multiple branches of government, the philanthropic community, and non-profit member partners to make this happen. Our goal is to leverage investment from these sources toward the well-being of the City. A strong vote of approval from Council will send a favorable signal to our funders.

## **Website**

Council members and members of the public can visit our website at [www.yorksafenet.org](http://www.yorksafenet.org) for easily accessible information about plans for the network. This is intended to be an ongoing source of updates for maximum transparency and accountability.



## Revised Policies

Since the October 7th council meeting, when community concerns and questions were voiced, we took note of those concerns, engaged in multiple discussions with proponents and critics, and amended and improved policies in an effort to address the major points of objection. Please see [this page](#) on our website for the newly revised policies.

## Frequently Asked Questions

The questions below summarize the concerns we heard and responded to in our policy revisions. These are also available on our website:

**Who owns York SafeNet?** As a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, we are not owned by any individual or organization, including founders or individual board members. Instead, we are managed by a board of directors who make decisions and oversee our work for the benefit of the public. All funding and property must be used to support the organization's mission.

**What types of cameras will be used?** The network is still in the early planning phase, so we have only looked at equipment for the sake of cost estimates.

**Will facial recognition be used?** No. Our policies specifically prohibit the use of facial recognition functionality.

**Will biometric information be stored?** No, we are intentionally not collecting unique biometric data like facial recognition, fingerprints, etc.

**What will the cameras be used to record?** Generally, cameras will be used when a crime has been committed and there is an ongoing investigation. They may also be used in cases when a person is missing.

**Will the cameras be used to look into homes or private property?**

No. Cameras located near residences would be digitally masked so that black boxes appear over a home's windows when the camera is turned in that direction. Only a monitoring supervisor and the executive director would be authorized to access or modify this software and if changing this functionality, they would follow a process disclosed to the public.

**How does the public hold a nonprofit accountable?** Our board is committed to representing the public and has been chosen to incorporate diverse perspectives and backgrounds. We will hold an annual public feedback forum and have a formal complaint process. Additionally, we are a member nonprofit whose members will likely include city and county governments as major



stakeholders. This allows the public to approach their elected officials with concerns. Those officials then have the power and leverage that can be exerted on our board because of their key partnership stake in the nonprofit.

**Who has access to the cameras and footage?** Our monitoring team will consist of trained staff with clearances, background checks, and who have signed confidentiality agreements. Working in accordance with our policies, staff will operate the camera network and work in cooperation (as is legally appropriate) with law enforcement. There will be no private or corporate access to the camera network.

**How long is the footage retained?** We are committed to not retaining footage past 30 days. Usually, it will be retained for seven days to save on storage.

**Can the public request access to footage, and how will those requests be handled?** There will be a process by which the public may request access to the camera footage. Access will be granted when required by a legal proceeding or in special circumstances when the board deems it in the best interest of the community. Personal or corporate use of the camera network will not be approved.

**Do the police have unrestricted access to the cameras?** No. Police must also abide by the policies of the camera network, showing that they have a legal rationale for each request they make. Police also will not control the operational policies of the network, allowing for it to be used as an accountability mechanism for law enforcement.

**Will state or federal agencies have access to the cameras?** Only when a valid legal justification is present. Our primary mission is to serve the local community.

**Will police be able to access the cameras remotely or get access to the monitoring room?** Police will have restricted access to the network through the staff of the network. They may at times visit the monitoring station, but will not have unlimited remote access to footage.

**Is there a log of what footage has been requested by police and when it was accessed?** Yes, a log will be kept of all requests, as well as when and why access is given. This log will be made publicly available periodically.

**Will you have a community advisory board?** Yes, we do plan to have a community advisory board. Our board of directors also serves to provide community representation as well as the member entities of our non-profit. We will also hold annual public forums where the community may provide direct feedback.



**How will the public be notified that a camera has been moved or that new cameras have been installed?** Maps of camera locations kept in live time will be published on our website and available to the public..

**Will SafeNet undergo an independent audit?** Yes. We are committed to ongoing independent audits of our camera placement, use of technology capabilities, and any of our other practices or policies.