

I. Statement about Sanctuary City:

On July 10th, 1985, Ithaca's Common Council declared Ithaca a sanctuary city for Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees during their civil wars. In February of 2017, Ithaca's Common Council unanimously adopted an ordinance formally declaring Ithaca a sanctuary city. Becoming a sanctuary city was a deliberate choice because our community prioritizes the safety of all residents, regardless of their immigration status. Flock cameras are not compatible with those values because surveillance creates a climate of suspicion, not sanctuary. While Flock advertises itself as a crime-fighting tool, the reality is that data does not stay neatly within our city lines. The data that these cameras collect are shared with outside counties, including agencies. This information can allow ICE to gain access, which directly undermines our sanctuary commitment.

Allowing Flock here would mean telling our immigrant neighbors and friends that their everyday movements (dropping kids at school, driving to work, visiting family) could be tracked and possibly used against them. This not only erodes trust in the local government of Ithaca and Tompkins County, but it also discourages people from reporting crimes, which makes us all less safe.

A sanctuary city should not contract with a system that can easily provide information into immigration enforcement. It should be compassion over fear and community over division. Flock does not match our values and the people should come first.

II. Statement about lack of Safeguards:

Flock tells cities that their technology has "safeguards", but those protections are not effective. There are no meaningful restrictions on how long data can be kept. The company says that data will be deleted after 30 days. A lot can happen in 30 days and local police can download and keep data indefinitely, outside of public view. With the lack of community oversight, there is no means for the public to verify this compliance.

In fact, Flock is a private company. Who audits them? Who checks to see what they are doing with the data? What are they REALLY doing with our data? Who holds them accountable if they misuse OUR data? What if they merged with another company, what then? Currently, Flock is pursuing a partnership with Nexar who makes dashcams. On September 5th, 2025, news broke that Nexar was hacked. They claimed that they had AI anonymize all data before it left the device, yet the hackers SHOWED the data they acquired to journalists proving that it was not anonymous. Nexar is proven to be extremely unprotected with data that is unanonymized and security that is embarrassing.

In a sanctuary city, that's a big gamble and risk. Flock's system is designed for cross-agency sharing. Without actual safeguards, there's nothing to stop this data from being shared directly or indirectly with ICE or other companies and jurisdictions that would contradict our goals and

morals. If our data was to get hacked, leaked, or misused, residents do not have any recourse. We are being asked to just believe these companies blindly, with no accountability.

The lack of safeguards around Flock cameras is extremely alarming to residents. The people should come first.

III. Statement about Data Privacy:

Flock cameras violate Ithacans' privacy. Ithaca is a peaceful community where people and their families should be able to trust one another. Blanketing our streets with surveillance cameras recording and memorializing our every move violates this trust.

Flock cameras automatically record every car that passes by them. Unlike a regular police officer, they don't need to sleep or rest: they're always watching. And these cameras record much more than just license plates. When Flock cameras record a vehicle, Flock's software automatically creates a "fingerprint" of the vehicle, including distinctive features like bumper stickers, and stores it in a database. Anyone with access to the database can use the data to track that vehicle over time. With enough cameras, the data can be used to pinpoint a car's location and map its movements over time.

What's more, the data logged by Flock is vulnerable to hacking, a corporate merger, or even a government search warrant. Flock claims that data is only stored for 30 days. Even if this were true, a 30-day collection of everywhere we travel around our community can create major violations of our personal privacy. Think about it. In any given 30-day window, people travel to doctors' offices, places of worship, schools, workplaces, and the homes of family and friends.

Thanks to Flock, all of this is catalogued, in detail, for every member of our community. There is no opting out. If you live in Ithaca, you've opted into surveillance without consent.

We raise our voice this evening here in upstate New York, but we are not alone. Communities across the US are speaking out against Flock's mass digital surveillance. In Virginia, a US federal judge allowed Norfolk residents' case to move forward in February challenging police use of Flock after they discovered over 170 cameras blanketing their community. And in Texas, the Austin City Council canceled its contract with Flock in June after residents spoke out.

Ithaca is not a place where you should fear being spied on. Let's choose to protect our city residents, not surveil them.

Get the Flock out of Ithaca.

IV. Statement about gun violence and the use of flock/ Fiscal Responsibility Argument

It is clear one of the main reasons motivating the Common Council to utilize Flock was tied to the surveillance and safety issues in Ithaca, as well as using grant money efficiently. However,

the use of Flock is not correlated to economic efficiency, or fiscal responsibility, in Ithaca. The IPD's contract with Flock costs [66,000 a year](#), paid for via the Give Grant. Overall, there are simply better things to do with this money that can help Ithaca become safer, and better ways to spend the grant within the community.

It is unclear under what circumstances the council was posed with in regard to the Flock camera usage. Overall, we know that Flock, a huge corporation with a robust marketing team, needed to sell a product. We know that the police department pitched the idea to the common council. It seems like council members were pitched this idea to prevent crime, and as a solution for decreasing police presence in Ithaca. A goal was to reduce gun violence, but many community members have questioned the relationship between preventing gun violence by tracking someone after the crime has occurred. Although the Council's initial intention may be valid, the usage of Flock has not resulted in the desired result. The city of Austin, which voted to take down the Flock system, found that "over [20% of LPR database searches](#) lacked proper documentation or justification." There are many other ways to decrease crime - like unarmed emergency staff, that may be less invasive methods to reduce violence.

Ithaca's residents work hard each day to provide food on their families' tables, keep up with rising prices in the City, and live their lives. The average city of Ithaca resident pays around [\\$8,000 in taxes](#), which is much more than the national average. As you can see here, there are so many Ithaca residents who do not want their hard-earned money being paid this way. The common council should listen to their constituents and end the flock contract before the renewal period.

V. Statement Regarding Particular Contract Provisions

We know from the city's contract with Flock and their product description that some cameras are "location-flexible." In fact, Flock specifies that all of the battery powered cameras are actually *movable*, which only increases the privacy concerns associated with the vehicle "fingerprint" technology. We already know that the Police Department isn't sharing the locations of these cameras with us. This movable feature eliminates the transparency of this policy, shrouding the data collection process in secrecy.

Under the contract, Flock keeps for itself the right to use any *anonymized* data it collects as it sees fit – They can use the data to develop other products and services, with no clear limit as to where or what they can use anonymized data for. This loophole is a dangerous opportunity for Flock to use its data in other jurisdictions outside of Ithaca.

The most concerning element of the contract is that it grants Flock the ability to disclose any data it believes that it is "legally required" to hand over. This means that if any federal agency came knocking, something they are very likely to do, and asked Flock for their data, Flock, and Flock alone, would decide whether they would be "legally required" to turn it over. Ithaca would have no say. In other words, it's completely up to Flock to make a judgment as to whether they will agree to any government request to access its data. In effect, Flock controls whether our data will end up with the government. There would be nothing the city could do about that

decision. This has real potential to undermine Ithaca's goals as a sanctuary city. Giving a private company this much control over this kind of sensitive data only serves to further jeopardize the privacy of our community.