

# Bloomington DSA



## Working Group

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### The fight against Flock is not over yet

The mayor's announcement is a step in the right direction but it doesn't go far enough.

BLOOMINGTON, IND. — You may have heard that Bloomington is cutting its contract with private surveillance company Flock Safety, but we're not celebrating yet.

The mayor's office took to [Reddit](#) Wednesday night to announce that Bloomington Police Department's contract with Flock actually ended more than a month ago, and that after careful consideration, it would not be renewed. We applaud Mayor Kerry Thomson for taking this important step that has tremendous support in our community.

But the vague commitment to "transition away" from Flock leaves more questions than it answers. For starters: which contract?

Based on the [memo](#) Police Chief Mike Diekhoff prepared in response to the city council's April 4 [resolution](#), the city has held a number of contracts with Flock to operate multiple kinds of surveillance technology: 11 License plate readers (LPRs), four video cameras, and four "mobile security trailers" that include both kinds of camera, as well as audio recording for gunshot detection.

The most recent contract, concerning the mobile trailers, was entered into on October 1, 2025, and has a nominal duration of 2 years. So by our math, we're locked in until at least September 31, 2027.

It's unclear, based on Diekhoff's memo which contract the mayor could be referring to, since none of the start dates correspond to March 5, the date provided in the mayor's press release. Additionally, all of the contracts appear to include automatic annual renewals unless Flock is notified more than 30 days in advance of the customer's wish to terminate the contract.

There's a reason we're quibbling about dates. Like the free trial you forgot to cancel, we may not be able to end the contract early.

After Evanston, Illinois attempted to [end its relationship](#) with Flock, the company challenged the city's right to do so and then REINSTALLED the cameras they had previously removed at the city's behest—this time without the city's permission.

Even if we take the mayor's word that the contract term was up in March, it begs another question: How is it that we're still using Flock's products?

In an [email](#) to city councilmembers, the mayor specifies that "The system is expected to remain temporarily active during the transition period," which extends at least through Little 500 weekend. Which begs yet another question: When does the "transition period" end?

Rather than providing specifics about how and when the city will actually stop using this technology, the mayor points to additional restrictions governing its use in the indefinite meantime, including regular audits and an end to data sharing.

But even as the mayor makes some concessions to transparency, she continues to mischaracterize the use of the technology.

Her claim that "BPD is not participating in Flock's national network, and the data collected by Bloomington cameras was shared only with other Indiana law enforcement agencies" is belied by [FOIA data](#) from Danville, Ill. showing that BPD did, in fact, query their cameras. The ability to search cameras in other jurisdictions is available to agencies who opt in to the national network

And while the mayor swears that, from now on, "outside agencies will not be able to query Bloomington camera data," it may not be fully within her power to ensure that.

While, as she insists, BPD does "own" the data collected by the cameras deployed here, Flock's terms grant the company a [broad license](#) to use customer data to "provide the Flock Services; and...support and improve Flock's products and services."

The company's terms of use has, in the past, enabled Flock to grant ["back door"](#) access to Border Patrol, enabling the agency to search the cameras of users who had specifically opted NOT to share their data with the federal agency. This is just one example, but demonstrates that decisions about how Bloomington's data is used rests not with the mayor, but with Flock itself.

The press release further asserts that "the system does not use facial recognition; does not contain, collect or reveal vehicle registration information such as a driver's name or address; and does not create profiles based on personal traits or demographic information."

First of all, collecting license plate numbers rather than vehicle registration information is a distinction without a difference.

As for the personal profiles, this too is an obfuscation. We never claimed that BPD was personally creating or accessing these profiles, but that Flock sells this extraordinarily [invasive technology](#), and that it was developed on the backs of the LPR network and its customers' data. Additionally, anyone with access to our camera network and registration data from the Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles could easily create such profiles.

And while the video cameras may not use facial recognition to connect names to faces, they do use AI to track people, and even automatically zoom in on individual faces. This is, by definition, facial recognition. It's then trivially easy to connect this video data with other commercially available facial recognition tools to put names to the faces. This was demonstrated by Youtube journalist [Benn Jordan](#), who was also able to access live feeds from [Condor](#) cameras: the same model employed by BPD.

But by far the biggest problem with the mayor's statement is that it doesn't close the door on private surveillance technology, even if they do show Flock out: "As Bloomington transitions away from Flock, we will evaluate replacement technologies and providers that better balance safety, privacy, and public trust."

While there's no denying that Flock has a terrible track record on safety, privacy and public trust, a different provider is not the solution—especially with recent [Indiana legislation](#) (SB0076) that mandates local cooperation with immigration enforcement. The only way to keep our data safe is not to collect it.

Police Chief Diekhoff is set to present his report to the city council at the next session on April 22. Join us as we pack the room and to demand what we all deserve: an end to mass surveillance in Bloomington.

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