Public Exhibition - Street Safety Camera Program Code of Practice

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Summary

This report proposes that the draft Street Safety Camera Program Code of Practice be placed on public exhibition.

The Street Safety Camera Program (Program) is the City of Sydney's public closed circuit television system. The Program consists of over 100 cameras monitored 24 hours a day by staff engaged by the City of Sydney.

The Program is governed by a Code of Practice and Protocol and Standard Operating Procedures, which are designed to protect the civil liberties and privacy of the community.

The Code of Practice was last reviewed in 2023, with a number of minor changes to technology and terminology approved by the Lord Mayor and Chief Executive Officer in accordance with item 4.2.2 of the Code of Practice.

In October 2025, the City commenced a full review of the Code of Practice including a number of meetings of the Street Safety Camera Program Working Group whose membership consists of the NSW Council for Civil Liberties, representing the public interest in the program, NSW Police Central Metropolitan Command and City of Sydney staff.

The Street Safety Camera Program Working Group has now completed its review of the Code of Practice and identified a number of updates that are considered to be major changes. In accordance with section 4.2.3 of the Code of Practice, major changes to the Program require the approval of Council.

It is recommended that Council approve the public exhibition of the draft Street Safety Camera Program Code of Practice.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

(A) Council approve for public exhibition the draft Street Safety Camera Program Code of Practice as shown at Attachment A to the subject report

(B) Council note that the draft Street Safety Camera Program Code of Practice, including any recommended changes, will be reported to Council for adoption following the exhibition period

(C) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to make minor changes to the draft Street Safety Camera Program Code of Practice for clarity or correction of drafting errors prior to public exhibition.

Attachment

Attachment A. Draft Street safety camera program code of practice (changes marked up)

Background

1. The Street Safety Camera Program (the Program) is the City of Sydney's public place closed circuit television (CCTV) system. The Program consists of over 100 cameras, monitored 24 hours a day by staff engaged by the City of Sydney. The location of these cameras has been determined through assessment of crime statistics and crime density mapping provided by NSW Police. Further information on the Program and a map of camera locations is available on the City's website.

2. The primary purpose of the Program is to assist in the prevention of crimes against the person.

3. The secondary purpose of the Program is to assist in the prevention of serious property crime.

4. The objectives of the Street Safety Camera Program are:

   (a) to reduce crime levels by deterring potential offenders

   (b) to reduce fear of crime

   (c) to help ensure a fast, effective police response in emergency situations

   (d) to assist in the detection and prosecution of offenders

   (e) to help secure a safer environment for those people who live in, work in and visit the City of Sydney.

5. CCTV is one measure to improve safety in the City's public space. The City's Safe City Strategy and nighttime economy projects, improved design of public spaces and building frontages, and alcohol-free zones, work in conjunction with CCTV to reduce crime and improve perceptions of safety.

6. The Program is governed by a Code of Practice which is designed to protect the privacy and civil liberties of the community.

7. The Code of Practice is a public document that contains the basic standards for the operation of the Street Safety Camera Program. There is an internal management Standard Operating Procedure which details the day-today control room procedures that underpin compliance with the Code of Practice.

8. Any changes to the Program must be in compliance with Section 4 of the Code of Practice, which states:

   > *A major change to the SSCP or the Code of Practice will take place only after consultation with relevant interest groups and upon the agreement of the Council of the City of Sydney. A major change is a change which will have a significant impact upon the operation of the program or the Code of Practice.*

9. In October 2025, the City commenced a full review of the Code of Practice and invited participation from the NSW Council for Civil Liberties, representing the public interest in the program and NSW Police Central Metropolitan Command.

10. The proposed updated Code of Practice reaffirms the Program's commitment to assisting with the prevention of serious criminal offences, specifically crimes against the person and serious property related crime.

Updates

11. The proposed changes and key implications include:

    (a) The generic reference to Police throughout the document is changed to Australian Law Enforcement Agency or Investigation/Intelligence Authority.

        (i) This change strengthens the approval process by ensuring requests from these agencies are made through official channels, rather than by individual officers.

        (ii) This change requires a senior officer to approve any request for investigation-related CCTV footage before an application can be submitted.

    (b) Allowing the use of camera and software analytics in analysis of footage.

        (i) This will allow for the introduction of camera based and software specific analytics, designed to trigger an alert when specific behaviours that could indicate a threat or incident are detected, such as a sudden large gathering, or people detected running away.

        (ii) Analytics will also assist in the review of footage in response to an application. The footage can be filtered based on predefined features such as male or female, adult or child, colour of clothing, carrying a bag; or colour and type of motor vehicle. This will increase efficiency and accuracy. Selected footage will always be reviewed by staff.

        (iii) The introduction of camera and software analytics will explicitly exclude the use of biometrics, including facial recognition technology.

    (c) The internal audit review of the Street Safety Camera Program will be carried out once every 4 years.

        (i) The internal audit conducted in 2025 recommended that the audit move from biennially to once every 4 years to coincide with the council term.

        (ii) In lieu of the biennial internal audit, it is recommended that a self-assessment be completed every 2 years to evaluate the awareness of staff and management involved in the operation of the program.

        (iii) An annual report will be completed summarising the activities of the program and published on the City's website for public access.

(d) The civilian application for CCTV footage process will be removed from the Code of Practice.

(i) Civilian applications for CCTV footage will be managed through Information Access to ensure that all requests are managed in accordance with *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (GIPA Act) and the NSW Information and Privacy Commission guidelines for managing access to audio visual information.

(e) Three cameras previously installed to monitor taxi ranks in the CBD will be removed as the Point-to-Point Transport Commission has now installed cameras at these locations.

(f) The retention time of recorder material will be extended from 28 days to 30 days. This aligns with the retention time in the NSW Government Policy Statement and Guidelines for the Establishment and Implementation of Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) in Public Places.

(g) Other minor changes have been made for clarity.

Key implications

Strategic alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

12. Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision renews the communities' vision for the sustainable development of the city to 2050. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the city, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This policy is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:

(a) Direction 1 - Responsible governance and stewardship - The Street Safety Camera Program Code of Practice ensures transparent, consistent and ethical decision making to ensure the public has trust and confidence in our civil leaders, including the City of Sydney.

(b) Direction 3 - Public places for all - The city centre is inviting and lively, clean, accessible and safe supported by the operations of the Street Safety Camera Program.

(c) Direction 7 - Resilient and diverse communities - The Street Safety Camera Program operates in collaboration with NSW Police to deter, detect, delay and respond to incidents in the public domain leading to a safer city centre for people to live, work and visit.

Organisational impact

13. The proposed updates to the Street Safety Camera Program Code of Practice do not have any effect on service levels or staffing. They are proposed to further strengthen the governance of the program and improve the effectiveness of its operation.

Risks

14. This approach is within the City's risk appetite, which states:

    (a) Service Delivery – we are open to exploring new opportunities and changing service levels to the community, taking into account community expectations needs and our financial sustainability.

    (b) People – we encourage collaboration with the NSW Government and other third parties to improve health and safety in the public domain. One of these collaborations is through the operation of the Street Safety Camera Program.

    (c) Reputation and image – we recognise the increased role that technology plays in the delivery of our services. We aim to strike a balance between achieving our strategic objectives, implementing change and embracing innovation and protecting our reputation.

    (d) Legal and Governance – we are committed to conducting our activities in full compliance with applicable laws, regulations and relevant industry standards. Where there are clear benefits to the community in pursuing a course of action, we may adopt a minimal risk appetite. Where pursuing this should be appropriately approved, recorded and effectively managed.

Financial implications

15. There are no financial implications from the update to the Street Safety Camera Program Code of Practice. The operation of the program is fully funded within current operational budgets.

Relevant legislation

16. The Street Safety Camera Program Code of Practice is based on the following legislation and guides:

    (a) Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998

    (b) NSW Government Policy Statement and Guidelines for the Establishment and Implementation of Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) in Public Places

    (c) Workplace Surveillance Act 2005

    (d) Information and Privacy Commission fact sheet "Local Councils' use of Closed-Circuit TV (CCTV) cameras in Public Places".

Public Consultation

17. Consultation for the review of the Code of Practice included the following stakeholder groups:

    (a) NSW Council of Civil Liberties who developed the proposed standards and controls for the introduction of camera and software analytics in Schedule 5 of the draft Code of Practice update.

    (b) NSW Police Central Metropolitan Command.

18. Subject to approval by Council, the draft Street Safety Camera Program Code of Practice will be placed on public exhibition for a minimum of 28 days.

19. Public exhibition will include:

    (a) a Sydney Your Say page including a revised Code and information about how to provide feedback

    (b) notice of the exhibition will be published on the City's website

    (c) advertising via the City's communication channels.

20. Following the public exhibition, the City will consider all submissions received and prepare a final version of the Street Safety Camera Program Code of Practice for Council endorsement.

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