

December 18, 2020

Dear Mayor Salas, (cc: Council members, Police Chief)

*During the December 8th City Council meeting, you requested that city staff prepare a comprehensive report providing details about the Vigilant Solutions data-sharing program. The report is to be presented to the Council in early January 2021, a timeline that we feel is inadequate for Chula Vista residents and organizations to provide input.*

The undersigned local residents and organizations write to request that City Council's deliberation and decisions regarding the City's contract with Vigilant Solutions be postponed until there is sufficient time for broad public review and community engagement. We appreciate your quick action to call for a comprehensive report. We also share the value of community engagement which stands at the core of the "Welcoming City" model and expect Chula Vista to meet a high standard of transparency and open governance.

Recent reporting in the Union-Tribune raised serious concerns about lack of transparency and oversight of this surveillance program. The report additionally raises larger issues regarding trust and safety that affect all members of our community. *The Council should not rush to a vote on this issue.* To do so results in mistrust of local law enforcement, misunderstanding of the decisions being made by Council, and missed opportunities to hear the voices of those you serve. Instead we are calling for ample time and avenues for community engagement in this deliberation.

Throughout the duration of this pandemic, government offices and meeting rooms have been closed off to community members, leaving Chula Vista residents with limited access to information and opportunities to voice concerns. We feel our voices have been muted. We want our comments to be HEARD – not just tabulated by the City Clerk in what feels dismissive of the time and effort it has taken for us to be informed, formulate cogent responses, and respond in the 1500 character-limit allotted in an eComment. It is particularly difficult for non-English speakers, people without computer access, and people who wish to do business in person as we did prior to the pandemic to stay informed and participate meaningfully in these essential discussions.

We realize COVID restrictions put a strain on the functioning of city government. While we are frustrated, we feel there are some important actions you can take.

Specifically, we request the following action:

- **Extend time to review the report.** The general public needs time to access and digest the report prior to the meeting at which the issues are discussed and decisions might be made. The usual timeline of online posting by noon on the Thursday prior to the meeting does not allow residents, community organizations, service providers, clients or other impacted groups in our

community, especially non-English proficient members of our community, enough time to process and respond. We believe two weeks after release of the report would provide community members time for thoughtful review.

• **Host a series of virtual “community listening sessions,” open for the public to engage in dialogue with Police Chief Kennedy and Council members, in each of the council districts.** We ask the City host a series of “Community Listening Sessions” adapted for a Zoom-type virtual forum. Community Listening Sessions have been used successfully by the San Diego Police Department. The current online system for providing public comments is unsatisfactory. One-way eComments do not allow city officials or the general public to physically hear comments during City Council meetings nor are eComments accessible in the audio-video record available after the meetings. The public needs an audible voice during the Council deliberations. With office closures and limited access to our elected officials, it is necessary to expand opportunities for concerned constituents to meet and discuss issues outside of Council meetings. As such, Community Listening Sessions are the perfect opportunity to expand meaningful community participation.

In summary, we ask for your help to ensure inclusion of community voices in any decisions regarding the Automated License Plate Reader program. During the pandemic we do not want the shutdown of city office spaces and the limitations on formats for public comment to shut us out of the governance process.

We value your partnership in serving the community and hope to hear from you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely yours,

**Local Residents and Businesses**

Alicia Riley, PhD, MA, MPH, Resident of Chula Vista District 2 (Galvez)

Allison Estrada, MD, Resident of Chula Vista District 3 (Padilla)

Ana K. Ortiz, MD, MPH, Resident of Chula Vista District 2 (Galvez)

Becky Thimm, Resident of Chula Vista District 1 (McCann)

Brenda Arnold, Resident of Chula Vista District 2 (Galvez)

Carolyn Scofield, Resident of Chula Vista District 2 (Galvez)

Cayce Smith, MD, San Diego City Council District 2

Connie Mack, Resident of Chula Vista District 2 (Galvez)

David Harris, Resident of San Diego District 4

Garcia Law Firm, Chula Vista business in District 4 (Cardenas)

Kathy Cappos-Hardy, Resident of Chula Vista District 2 (Galvez)

Kate Bishop, Resident of Chula Vista District 2 (Galvez)

Lois Klepin, Resident of Chula Vista District 4 (Cardenas)

Luz Maria Lopez, Resident of Chula Vista District 1 (McCann)

Lynn DeHahn, Resident of Chula Vista District 2 (Galvez)

Margaret Baker, DrPH, Resident of Chula Vista District 2 (Galvez)  
Monica Santos, Resident of Chula Vista District 2 (Galvez)  
Meena Kaypour (USD student and concerned San Diego resident)  
Nick Paul, Resident of Chula Vista District 3 (Padilla)  
Patti Huffman, Resident of Chula Vista District 2 (Galvez)  
Pedro Rios, Resident of Chula Vista District 4 (Cardenas)  
Ricardo Medina, Resident of District 2 (Galvez), Member of the Human Relations Commission

**Organization Signatories**

Advancing Students Forward  
Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment San Diego  
Alliance San Diego  
American Friends Service Committee – San Diego  
Asian Solidarity Collective  
Border Angels  
Borderlands for Equity  
Change Begins With Me (Indivisible)  
Espacio Migrante  
Indivisible San Diego Persist  
Partnership for the Advancement of New Americans  
Pillars of the Community  
Rise Up San Diego  
San Diego Border Dreamers  
San Diego Immigrant Rights Consortium  
Social Justice Ministry Team of First Unitarian Universalist Church (Chula Vista & San Diego)  
South Bay People Power  
Tech Worker Coalition San Diego  
TRUST SD Coalition  
UURISE - Unitarian Universalist Refugee & Immigrant Services & Education  
We The People SD