



DATE: September 16, 2019
TO: Council Infrastructure Committee
FROM: Police Chief
SUBJECT: StarChase Program

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee recommends that the Council authorizes the purchase of the StarChase Pursuit Management System.

SUMMARY

The Hayward Police Department (HPD) has identified a pursuit management system to assist in crime reduction, increase safety for our community and police officers, and reduce financial exposure. The pursuit management system is known as StarChase Pursuit Management System. StarChase is a GPS tagging and monitoring system that is deployed from marked police vehicles. Staff is seeking authorization to outfit fifteen police vehicles with this technology.

BACKGROUND

High speed police pursuits are inherently dangerous not only to the public, but also to the police officers who engage in them. As such, police departments throughout the state, including HPD, have modified their pursuit policies through the years, making them more restrictive regarding what crimes are pursuable.

Currently, HPD Policy 307 allows officers to pursue vehicles under the following circumstances:

Officers may engage in vehicular pursuits only when the officer can articulate the following factors are present:

- a. When a violator is driving in a non-hazardous manner but willfully failing to yield to emergency lights and siren, the officer may continue to follow the vehicle unless the driving behavior or circumstances change that would make it unsafe to continue, or*
- b. When the violator is believed to be a violent felon who poses a significant, ongoing threat to public safety.*

- c. *When the violator is believed to be a violent misdemeanor, armed, and poses a significant and ongoing threat to public safety.*
- d. *Pursuits of suspected intoxicated drivers where the driving of the subject PRIOR to the attempted stop already presented an intolerable risk of injury or death to persons other than the subject. The seriousness of the offense and the threat posed by the fleeing suspects(s) must justify the vehicle pursuit.*

The seriousness of the offense and the threat posed by the fleeing suspects(s) must justify the vehicle pursuit.

While the balancing of the need to protect public safety with the need to apprehend violators of the law continues to be analyzed, police departments throughout the country are looking to alternative methods to try and accomplish both. Some larger departments have dedicated air support units that are utilized to monitor and follow offenders from safe distances with no threat of injury to the public or officers. It is not unusual for the suspect to resume normal operation of their vehicle in order to attempt to blend in with surrounding traffic because they perceive they are not being pursued by law enforcement.

Air Units in our region are very limited and are seldom available to engage in vehicle pursuits. The StarChase system will allow the Hayward PD to accomplish the same goal, and even broaden an officer's ability to apprehend criminals who do not meet current vehicle pursuit policy parameters.

DISCUSSION

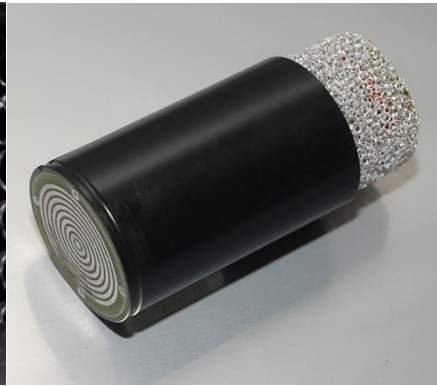
StarChase is a pursuit management tool that allows an officer to deploy a non-lethal GPS tracking tag, via a compressed-air launcher from the front grille of a patrol vehicle, with the intent of affixing an adhesive-tipped tag to the rear portion of suspect's vehicle. Once attached to the vehicle, the tag broadcasts secure Web-based, real-time position mapping data to mobile data terminal devices and to the police communications center. Police personnel can then use mapping data to monitor and locate the involved vehicle once it comes to a stop.

The system is comprised of three separate components: the deployment system; GPS tracking tags; and a control console. The deployment system utilizes compressed air to deploy the GPS tagging device, which is housed in a tube-like structure mounted to the front of the police vehicle. The GPS tracking tag is a small cylindrical shaped object which contains adhesive allowing the tag to adhere to the involved vehicle. The GPS tags create little to no damage to the suspect vehicle and are retrievable for refurbishment and redeployment. Once the GPS tag is adhered to the suspect vehicle, it begins to give five second updates regarding the suspect's vehicle location.

Launcher



Adhesive Dart



Adhered Dart



Controller



Currently within the Bay Area region, StarChase is being utilized by Pittsburg PD, San Pablo PD, Contra Costa Sheriff's Department, and Brentwood PD. In order to get a better overview of the system and obtain independent data regarding its success/failure rate, HPD Personnel visited Pittsburg PD for a demonstration. Pittsburg has utilized the StarChase system for well over a year, and currently has nearly half of its fleet outfitted with the device. PPD utilizes StarChase heavily in conjunction with a robust license plate reader camera program. In a six-month period (March 2018 to September 2018), they have had 60 StarChase deployments. These deployments have resulted in the recovery of 52 stolen or vehicles used in violent crimes and 54 occupants of the vehicles being arrested for an array of charges.

FISCAL IMPACT

HPD's FY 2020 Capital Improvement Plan Budget included funds to outfit fifteen police vehicles with the StarChase tool. The initial vehicle deployment cost is \$94,883.23. To offset the initial cost of the program, the police department applied for and was awarded a grant from the Bay Area Urban Area Security Initiative in the amount of \$30,000, lowering the initial implementation cost to \$64,883.

Annual recurring costs will be \$14,250 (tracking units per vehicle and monitoring). The recurring costs will be requested in future HPD annual budgets, as needed.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

This agenda item is not directly related to the City Council's Strategic Initiatives.

SUSTAINABILITY FEATURES

StarChase Pursuit management system will significantly improve the capabilities of the police department to reduce crime. This purchase will allow officers to track and apprehend criminals who flee from the police while increasing safety to the public, officers, and suspects.

NEXT STEPS

Upon Committee recommendation, staff will move forward with adding this item to the earliest City Council consent calendar agenda to ask Council to approve the purchase.

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Recommended by: Bryan Matthews, Captain
Toney Chaplin, Police Chief

Approved by:



Kelly McAdoo, City Manager