DeFlock Ridgecrest — 2026 Candidate Questionnaire

Surveillance Technology and the City's Flock Safety Contract

To: Candidates for Ridgecrest City Council and Mayor **Return by:** 9/29/26 **Return to:** deflockridgecrest@googlegroups.com **Time required:** about ten minutes

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Why we're asking

The City of Ridgecrest holds a contract with Flock Safety, an automated license plate reader (ALPR) vendor. Residents have been raising questions about that contract for over a year. Voters deserve to know where each candidate stands before they mark a ballot.

This questionnaire goes to every candidate for Council and Mayor, with identical questions and the same deadline. We will publish all responses exactly as written, without editing.

If we do not receive your response by [DATE], we will publish your entry as "Did not respond." We would much rather publish your answers.

Disclosure: one member of our committee, Brenda Licitra is a candidate in this election. She received this questionnaire on the same day and under the same deadline as every other candidate, and her responses will be published alongside everyone else's with her committee membership noted.

Background you'll need for Question 3

On August 3, 2026, a set of proposed amendments to the City's Master Services Agreement with Flock Safety was transmitted to the company through the Ridgecrest Police Department. The amendments rewrite Sections 4.3 and 5.3 of that agreement, along with the conforming changes needed to give them effect. They have six objectives:

> **Rights end when the contract ends.** Whatever rights the company holds in data collected on Ridgecrest's behalf terminate with the agreement, and the data is destroyed with written certification.

No disclosure on the company's own judgment. Data may be handed over only under a defined, externally verifiable legal standard, with notice to the City.
Nothing leaves California. No data collected on Ridgecrest streets reaches any federal agency or any agency outside California, in any capacity.
The City can see who is searching its data, and that visibility cannot be reduced without the City's approval.
Anonymization must be proven, not asserted — documented methodology, independently verified.
Material changes require a public vote. Changes to the agreement or to system configuration need Ridgecrest City Council approval at a public meeting.

As of [DATE], Flock Safety has [not responded].

A complete copy of the proposed amendment is attached to this questionnaire.

Part 1 — Yes or No (8 questions)

Please mark **YES** or **NO** for each. You may add up to 40 words of explanation on the line below any question. We will publish both the yes/no answer and your comment.

1. Will you vote to place the City's Flock Safety contract on a public City Council agenda for discussion and a recorded vote within your first 90 days in office?

X YES ☐ ~~NO~~ Comment: This topic being placed on the agenda should be moved to the top of the list because of its correlation to individual civil rights. I don't need a quarter of a year to address the concerns of the Ridgecrest residents. It is long overdue! My leadership swims upstream when weighing safety and loss of civil rights. I believe the current City Council could have addressed this matter faster.

2. Will you vote to end the City's contract with Flock Safety at the earliest date the agreement allows, rather than continue it in any form?

X YES ☐ ~~NO Comment~~: Having completed my own due diligence, comparing the overall safety of the public against public desires and civil rights afforded to all Americans, I cannot, will not, in good conscience, FORFEIT what our founding fathers envisioned for our country. Citizens have civil rights and we DO NOT surrender them because of a few bad actors within the community.

3. If Flock Safety's response does not satisfy all six of the objectives listed above, will you vote to end the contract rather than renew it?

XYES ☐ ~~NO~~ Comment: My sphere of protection not only includes public safety but protecting civil rights of everyday citizens. Because a technology claims an easier efficient pathway for apprehending nefarious behaviors, does not automatically mean giving up a right that our people have fought for over the previous decades. PUBLIC SAFETY vs PERSONALCIVIL

LIBERTIES are not equal-level, One promises one thing while the other is guaranteed. Keeping any ~~police~~ POLICY that infringes on civil liberties is a NON-STARTER.

4. Do you support requiring the City to publish an annual public report on how the camera system is used — including the number of searches run, the stated purpose of those searches, and which outside agencies accessed Ridgecrest data?

☐ ~~YES~~ **XNO** Comment: The report frequency is in error. The report should be published monthly, quarterly at a minimum. We are in the world of hyper speed information. People in leadership, in this case law enforcement, should adapt at a similar pace. " I want to know if my car has a mechanical problem in the first hour on a 12-hour road trip." Conducting annual reviews do not hold direct accountability if wrongs are conducted in month one but reported 11 months later. Measure the outcome monthly is what I demand of leadership! Anyone who says that that is stringent never had to protect the entire country like I did in the military.

5. If the Council votes to suspend or end the contract, will you insist the City obtain written confirmation that the cameras have been physically removed and deactivated, rather than accepting a paper cancellation alone?

X YES ☐ ~~NO~~ Comment: My 20-years of military leadership as a retired Senior Chief Petty Officer, warning bells are going off on this question. I use a methodical approach to getting S**t done. "A job worth doing is a job worth doing well, or don't do it at all." It is apparent in my laymen-level observation that current leadership may apply the same level of awareness that they have used in the past. The word insist is to gentle of a word to use. I will personally be at the location(s) to ensure the work is completed even if it is a weekend. Why, because the constituents have spoken. IF I am City Council, I work for the people, not the other way around.

> **For questions 6 and 7, "surveillance technology" means any equipment, software, or service whose primary purpose is to collect, retain, analyze, or share data about identifiable people or vehicles in public places. Examples include automated license plate readers, facial recognition, gunshot detection, cell-site simulators, drones used for monitoring, and predictive policing software.**

6. Do you support a City ordinance requiring City Council approval, at a noticed public meeting, before the Police Department or any City department acquires or begins using any new surveillance technology — including equipment received as a donation, a grant, a free trial, or access granted through another agency or a private company, and regardless of which vendor supplies it?

X YES ☐ ~~NO~~ Comment: It is my understanding that having a healthy dose of discourse and public concurrence should occur when making choices that directly impact the cities safety or civil liberties and the like. Yes!!! I will advocate for a noticed public hearing as well as propose it to the agenda again and again. I would also add that I advocate for monthly city town halls with public participation, not waiting for a prescribed date on the calendar to voice concerns.

7. Do you agree that if the City ends its Flock contract, replacing it with a comparable system from a different vendor would not address the concerns residents have raised?

☐ ~~YES~~ **X NO** Comment: NO, NO, NO. I do not want Ridgecrest to have to subject itself to another comparable, civil rights infringement, guilty until proven innocent, type system. My position on the matter is to invite more people to the table for discussion, explore moon shot big and small ideas, apply risk mitigation weighing pros and cons exhausting all options/protections including our most vulnerable communities, then pull the trigger!

8. Do you support requiring, in writing in the contract, that no data collected by Ridgecrest cameras be shared with, or searchable by, any federal agency or any agency outside California?

X YES ☐ ~~NO~~ Comment: Who in the world of 2026 can agree to provide CA blanch to giving away PII (Personal Identity Information)? This is another NON STARTER. " What we DO here, SEE here, STAYS here"

Part 2 — Short Answer (2 questions, 100 words maximum each)

9. Suppose Flock Safety agrees to everything the City has asked for. Would you still vote to end the contract? Explain why or why not.

DENIED. The company (FLOCK / PLACER AI / Whirlpool, no offense to Whirlpool) dragged its feet into providing a valid answer response to its surveilled concerned customers in a professional timely manner. They stalled long enough, positioning themselves to shield legal protection litigations. Thus, you lost my TRUST due to your "actions and inactions."

10. What is the strongest argument *against* your own position on this contract, and why do you still hold your position?

The strongest argument against my position is that ALPR cameras assist police in quickly locating stolen vehicles and tracking suspects involved in serious crimes, potentially enhancing immediate neighborhood security.

However, I maintain my position because true public safety cannot exist at the expense of our fundamental civil rights. Accepting perpetual dragnet surveillance creates unacceptable risks to individual liberty and privacy. Effective law enforcement relies on community trust, targeted investigation, and constitutional policing—not on sweeping up data on every resident going about their daily life. We can maintain safe neighborhoods through proven, constitutional policing without compromising basic civil liberties.

11. A counter question for this survey. Hypothetically, if FLOCK is defeated, no similar technology to counter- act crime is introduced, and public safety is a #1-3 concern for the city of Ridgecrest, wouldn't the absence of FLOCK create a void? What would DE

Flock propose as remedies to mitigate crimes while simultaneously enhance public safety? I propose: 1) examination of all options (past/present) for overall public safety. 2) hold a group think mastermind to capture all ideas, 3) rack and stack priorities against risks, and 4) get the ideas on paper to present to the citizens of Ridgecrest for debate/consensus. What are you thoughts?

Attestation

By signing, you confirm these are your own responses, you authorize DeFlock Ridgecrest to publish them verbatim, and you commit to reading the full Master Services Agreement and any Order Forms the City has signed with Flock Safety before casting any vote on this contract.

Name: LAWRENCE C. GACOTA Office sought: RIDGECREST CITY COUNCIL

Date: 9/16/26 Signature: _____

DeFlock Ridgecrest is a group of local residents. We are not affiliated with any candidate, party, or campaign. We publish what candidates tell us verbatim.