



SURVEILLANCE TECHNOLOGY WORKING GROUP

February 1, 2022

RECOMMENDATION FOR QUALIFIED APPROVAL

S.T. No. 22-001 "Samsara"

Mayor Ben Walsh
City of Syracuse
City Hall Room 203
233 East Washington Street
Syracuse, New York 13202-1473

RE: *Surveillance Technology Working Group*
S.T. No. 22-001 "Samsara"
Summary Report and Recommendation

Dear Mayor Walsh:

In accordance with Executive Order No. 2 issued on December 1, 2020, authorizing a Surveillance Technology Working Group ("STWG") to comprehensively evaluate surveillance technologies proposed for implementation by various City of Syracuse departments, and to seek out and consider related public input, STWG has completed its review of *S.T. No. 22-001 "Samsara"* as proposed for implementation by the Department of Public Works ("DPW") and hereby recommends **QUALIFIED APPROVAL** of *S.T. No. 22-001 "Samsara"* based on the reasons and considerations as summarized within this Report and Recommendation:

S.T. NO. 22-001 "SAMSARA" SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

DPW is looking to use GPS tracking for real-time location of the department's fleet. The Public Works technology also provides camera images along driver routes to aid in ensuring crew safety and accountability. The Public Works fleet technology that performs GPS tracking and uses cameras that will be permanently installed on DPW trucks and equipment. It operates continuously storing data in a cloud-based environment available for recall on-demand. Fleet Operations superintendents will have access to the data through a web portal.

STWG FINDINGS

Rich Devesty, Director of Fleet Operations, submitted Samsara's vehicle telematics technology on behalf of DPW. In addition to submitting the surveillance technology form, Mr. Devesty also attended a session of the SWTG and answered detailed questions from members of the group in respect to the intended use, data collection capability and access, among other similar matters.



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The Samsara Telematics technology offers a wealth of data regarding the fleet including GPS trackers and the potential of integrating other sensors. Of particular interest to the group was the video collecting capabilities that would be installed in vehicles in DPW’s fleet. The intended use of this is not to surveil but to collect footage in case of an accident and to monitor the conditions of the streets. However, video footage of private vehicles or individuals in the street could be captured. This data is stored in the vendor’s cloud, will only be deleted after 10 years, and can only be accessed by select individuals at DPW but Mr. Devesty did point out that he would provide the data to the Syracuse Police Department (“SPD”), or other departments, if it was requested.

No cybersecurity specifications were discussed. It was understood that this would be the responsibility of the vendor.

Upon considering the information provided, STWG sought input from Syracuse residents and local stakeholders. This did not generate as much interest as other technologies put under review – only 9 comments were given. The majority of the feedback was split evenly between supporters and detractors, with some comments requesting to have more information about how the data is used and accessed.

The STWG considered the public commentary in reaching its conclusion to recommend Samsara’s approval. The group concluded that while the intended use of the technology is not intended to threaten privacy, there are some risks that could be mitigated by incorporating the recommendations included in the next section.

The STWG voted for recommendation of *S.T. No. 22-001* at its January 25, 2022 regularly scheduled meeting as follows¹:

STWG Member	Vote In Favor	In Favor w/ Stipulations	Vote Against	Abstention	Absence
Departmental stakeholders					
Brian Eisenberg, Code Enforcement					X
Tim Gleeson, Fire Department					X
Joe Cecile, Police Department		X			
Kelsey May, Digital Services		X			
Sharon Owens, Deputy Mayor		X			
Michelle Sczpanski, Neighborhood Development		X			
Jake Dishaw, Code Enforcement					X
Jennifer Trift, Neighborhood Development		X			
Mujtaba Tirmizey, Office of Corporation Counsel		X			
Nicolas Diaz, Accountability, Performance & Innovation		X			
Jessica Brandt, Accountability, Performance & Innovation		X			

¹ Absent members were given the opportunity to vote via email for a period of one week after the meeting.



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External stakeholders					
Mark King		X			
Ken Stewart		X			
Johannes Himmelreich		X			
Ocesa Keaton		X			
Lanessa Chaplin				X	
Martha Grabowski		X			

STIPULATIONS AND/OR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

To mitigate any potential risk of misuse to citizen's privacy, the SWTG recommends taking the following measures:

- Draft a written policy for accessing video footage:** The implementation of this technology introduces a novel circumstance in City Government as it adds the capability to record video footage in public spaces by a department that's not the SPD. Video footage in SPD is regulated by a series of policies and regulations that would not be applicable in this case. Therefore, the City should draft new regulatory policies that would apply here. The department already has a series of practices that regulate how data is accessed, but they have not been formalized. At the minimum, this new policy should include limitations of who can access video footage and under what circumstances, as well as what disciplinary actions will be taken in case that this is not followed.
- Establish a formal process to share video footage with other departments:** Tied to the previous point, there are currently no stipulations to when the data can be shared with other departments. The SWTG does not oppose the sharing of video footage when the need arises. However, we do object to this occurring indiscriminately since this could lead to misuse of the footage. At the very minimum, request for video access should be in writing, coming from the leadership of other departments, and should explain the full extent of data request (avoiding indiscriminate access) and its purpose. This should create a 'paper trail' that would permit accountability in case of any data misuse.
- Reduce the data retention period:** Currently the video footage will be deleted only after 10 years. The committee recommends that DPW reassess this duration and chooses a length that is the minimum amount of time to meet its operational objectives.
- Request the vendor to have a clear cybersecurity plan, data breach policy, and incentives to comply:** It was not made clear to the committee what cybersecurity measures are in place to protect the data. We recommend that the City asks the vendor to submit their cybersecurity plan for review. More importantly, it should establish clear guidelines indicating that in case of a breach, the City should be given notice in a timely



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fashion to assess its extent and severity. Penalties should be imposed if the vendor fails to do so.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Affixed hereto is the public commentary feedback sought and received by STWG, as reviewed and considered in recommending *S.T. No. 22-001* with provisions. Also affixed are SWTG's meeting slides containing relevant notes and discussion points relative to *S.T. No. 22-001*.

CONCLUSION

Based on the aforementioned considerations, SWTG RECOMMENDS *S.T. No. 22-001 "Samsara"* FOR **QUALIFIED APPROVAL**.

Very Truly Yours,

Nicolas Diaz
Chair
Surveillance Technology Working Group