



CITY OF HOUSTON - CITY COUNCIL

Meeting Date:

Item Creation Date:

HPD - Security Camera Ordinance

Agenda Item#:

Background:

The City Attorney and Chief of Police for the Houston Police Department recommend that City Council approve an Ordinance amending Chapter 28 of the Code of Ordinances to add a new Article XXI, containing Sections 28-671 through 673, and to add a new Section 28-411.

As background, the City of Houston has experienced an increase of violent crimes due to the pandemic, social anxiety and economic uncertainty, open carry law and a strained criminal justice system resulting in a criminal backlog of cases. The City of Houston Code of Ordinances does not currently require that owners and operators of bars, nightclubs, sexually oriented businesses, convenience stores, and game rooms provide exterior video coverage of their buildings.

The purpose of the proposed amendment to Chapter 28, Miscellaneous Offenses and Provisions, is to establish a requirement for bars, nightclubs, sexually oriented businesses, convenience stores, and game rooms to install exterior security cameras providing video coverage from the exterior of the building to the property line. The ordinance lists technical specifications for the cameras, which must operate at all times. The ordinance also requires convenience stores to place lighting, at least six foot-candles in brightness, in any place to which customers are permitted access. The lighting must be turned on between sunset and sunrise and shall not be directed onto residential properties.

The camera and lighting requirements are to take effect on the 90th day following passage and approval of this ordinance. Additionally, the ordinance requires that a camera owner or operator store video footage for no less than 30 days, and provide HPD with the footage within 72 hours of a request.

This ordinance is part of the Mayor's commitment to One Safe Houston, which is a comprehensive violence reduction initiative focused on:

1. Violence Reduction
2. Crisis Intervention, Response and Recovery
3. Youth Outreach Opportunities
4. Key Community Partners

The use of technology is crucial to the safety of our residents and the security of local businesses. The collaboration between local businesses and law enforcement to leverage technology will prove invaluable in the efforts to better identify and apprehend persons alleged to have committed violent crimes.

Fiscal Note:

There is no impact to the fiscal budget or no additional spending authority. Therefore, no Fiscal Note is required as stated in the Financial Policies.

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