

Oakland, Calif., bars city from using facial recognition technology

July 18 2019, by Ali Tadayon



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Oakland police and other city departments will not use facial recognition technology under a new policy—the third of its kind in the United States.

The Oakland City Council unanimously approved the policy Tuesday.

San Francisco was the first U.S. city to prohibit the facial recognition technology in May, and Somerville, Mass., prohibited the technology in June. A second required vote on Oakland's ordinance is scheduled for the Sept. 17 City Council meeting, after which the policy would go into effect.

The technology has been widely criticized for infringing on people's privacy, and a 2008 report by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology found the technology disproportionately misidentifies people of color.

"It is literally racially biased policing software; we don't need this in our town," Tracy Rosenberg of the citizen group Oakland Privacy said at Tuesday's meeting.

The ordinance faced backlash from the [police department](#), which sought a limited ban that would only apply to "real-time" facial recognition technology. Real-time facial recognition technology scans surveillance footage in "real-time" to spot and track people, while non-real-time technology is used to run mugshots through state and federal databases.

The police department does not use any real-time facial recognition technology and has no plans to purchase it, according to a report from police Chief Anne Kirkpatrick.

"Non-real time (facial recognition technology) cannot be used to connect people as they go about their normal course of life and business," Kirkpatrick said in the report. "However, [law enforcement](#) can use (facial recognition technology) to expedite the time-consuming manual process of connecting images from crime scenes to local mug shot databases."

The ordinance that passed Tuesday night, however, applies to both real-time and non-[real-time facial recognition technology](#).

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Citation: Oakland, Calif., bars city from using facial recognition technology (2019, July 18)
retrieved 20 April 2024 from
<https://techxplore.com/news/2019-07-oakland-calif-bars-city-facial.html>

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