

homicides, robberies, etc...., and these are all from private businesses," he says.

And though Kerlikowske doesn't foresee blanketing the city with public surveillance cameras, pointing to the city's relatively low crime rate, government use of video surveillance cameras here is expanding. Recently, the city announced a ramping up of its red-light cameras from six to 30, with a presence at 22 intersections.

This new crop of cameras is building on last year's successful pilot program, which placed cameras at four intersections

der of Shannon Harps, along with 1,300 reported police incidents in Cal Anderson last year and the huge surge in graffiti-related incidents, "underscored a need to ensure public safety in the neighborhood," says Joelle Lignon, a Parks spokesperson.

Klunder remains highly skeptical that the cameras will effectively deter crime or even improve safety. "It really is a feel-good measure that doesn't address the real issues, and it diverts resources," says Klunder, who favors officers over cameras.

Needless to say, he's not overly opti-

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throughout the city. "Red-light running is down 56 percent, and the severity of accidents is down," says Kerlikowske.

If video surveillance is going to be part of the modern-day culture, red-light cameras are among the least intrusive, says Doug Klunder, privacy project director of the Washington state ACLU, speaking from his office in downtown Seattle. But, he cautions, "Just having the infrastructure, there's always the fear that somewhere down the line there will be mission creep, but having good state legislation helps."

That good state legislation includes protection for people's rights, says Klunder. Red-light cameras take pictures only when an infraction occurs, and photos are taken from the rear of the vehicle, revealing only the license plate, not the driver or other passengers in the car. Other protective features, says Klunder, include not allowing the government to engage in commissioned agreements with camera vendors.

More worrisome—from a privacy standpoint—are the video surveillance cameras that were installed in late February by Seattle Parks and Recreation at the Bobby Morris Playfield. The cameras are the first ever installed in a Seattle park, the result of a number of incidents in the park in which individuals were either harmed or in danger of being harmed, according to a 2006 public safety report.

Additionally, the New Year's Eve mur-

mistic about the city's upcoming plan to mount surveillance cameras in three more parks, also with the aim of deterring crime: Hing Hay in the International District, Occidental in Pioneer Square and Victor Steinbrueck near the Pike Place Market. The cameras will operate 24 hours per day in passive mode. That means video will be recorded, but not monitored in real time, unless there's "a triggering event," such as a call to 9-1-1 for help or a report of criminal activity.

The cameras are just one component of the mayor's Center City parks strategy to make parks accessible and attractive to users and visitors alike, says Marty McOmber, a spokesman for the mayor's office. "Cameras can be effective, especially when they are used as part of a comprehensive effort to make Seattle parks safe, welcoming and inviting," he says.

Klunder, however, says the type of cameras that will be used in the parks are the most insidious because they have the capability to track and follow, and thus the most potential to invade our privacy. "The worst kinds of cameras are the ones that pan and zoom and tilt any way you want," he says. Kerlikowske has a different take on this. "When you're out in public, people do not have an expectation of privacy," he says.

The privacy issue is also a concern of University of Washington Professor Batya

Friedman, an information and computer scientist, and a lead author of the book "The Watcher and the Watched: Social Judgments About Privacy in a Public Place." "Well-lit streets could prevent crimes as well, and yet they don't raise the same privacy concerns as video surveillance cameras," she points out. Friedman says an overlooked element in the conversation about surveillance and privacy is how endemic surveillance affects women. "Based on our research in the Pacific Northwest," says Friedman, "women are more concerned about the presence of cameras in public spaces than men."

Klunder cites a study that bears out his concern, in which a researcher watched camera operators from a control room and found that "down-and-out scruffy-looking people and pretty women" were the two groups that were vastly disproportionately tracked, even though the camera operators themselves knew they were being watched by a researcher. "Basically, we're installing infrastructure for voyeurs," says Klunder.

Meanwhile, some groups are fighting video surveillance by turning the tables on the governments and big corporations that are doing the watching. In one example, the Eastern Missouri Chapter of the ACLU launched Project Vigilance, where residents of St. Louis' north side armed themselves with video cameras, hoping their presence in the predominantly African-American area would deter police abuse. The widespread use of digital cameras, video-capable cell phones and distribution tools like YouTube is also starting to level the playing field, at least somewhat. And some people—like Santa Barbara-based *Computerworld* columnist Mike Elgan—are crusading to legislate the surveillance of interactions between citizens and law enforcement, between caregiver and child, and meetings with politicians and lobbyists.

But none of this eases Klunder's concerns. "We're becoming worse than Big Brother," he says. "With Big Brother, you knew he was there. It was very visible. Now, it's Big Brother behind an invisibility cloak where they're doing the watching, and you don't know when you're being watched, and by whom, and what information is being gathered on you or what they're doing with it." ❦

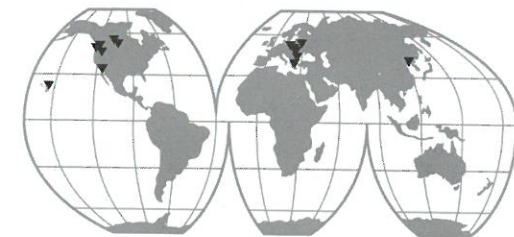
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