

## Flores, Valerie

---

**Subject:** FW: Public Comment - Public Safety Committee meeting 8/12/2020

**From:** Yadi <email.yadi@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Wednesday, August 12, 2020 11:31 AM

**To:** PublicComment-AutoResponse <publiccomment@cityofpasadena.net>; Flores, Valerie <vflores@cityofpasadena.net>

**Subject:** Public Comment - Public Safety Committee meeting 8/12/2020

**CAUTION:** This email was delivered from the Internet. Do not click links or open attachments unless you know the content is safe.

The use of facial recognition software by Pasadena PD should be stopped immediately. It is alarming on several fronts that the Pasadena Police Department and the City has allowed the use of facial recognition technology that has been proven to be unreliable, discriminatory, and a threat to our civil rights as citizens of Pasadena.

As a founder of a tech company that utilized facial recognition software to confirm an individual's identity, I can personally attest to the severe limitations of this software. I know, because I personally gathered data to reduce the bias and discrimination by the software against people of color. This technology is not ready for mainstream use and should not be used in Pasadena.

In December 2019, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) released a landmark study of prominent facial recognition algorithms that found Asian and African American people were up to 100 times more likely to be misidentified than white men, depending on the particular algorithm and type of search. According to a peer-reviewed study by researchers at MIT, facial recognition technology products perform poorly for people with darker skin and women. When ACLU ran photos of members of Congress through Amazon's "Rekognition" recently, it found that 28 members of Congress incorrectly "matched" with mugshot booking photos of arrestees. Of the false matches, 39 percent were people of color, even though people of color make up only 20 percent of lawmakers in Congress.

Pasadena should not be used as a guinea pig or allow unfettered access of its citizen's data to help improve the algorithms of tech companies handing out surveillance software like candy.

It is also alarming that the Pasadena Police Department and the City side-stepped normal channels of implementing new policies and practices, including prohibiting the citizens of Pasadena from knowing, or being given the opportunity to express their opinion or consent on the use of surveillance technology in Pasadena. Just because the technology was free is no reason to by-pass normal and thorough vetting processes, which include knowing the full extent of the technology being implemented, its limitations, third-party vendors, and how the data of Pasadena citizens is stored, handled, shared and kept secure. The security and privacy of the data of citizens is especially important in light of an ever growing number of data hacks like the Equifax breach, and the abuse of consumer data for corporate profits. Yet unlike a password or a credit card number, a local resident cannot "reset" his or her face if it is compromised due to a breach of City or vendor databases. Citizens should have the right to know how their data is being used and should have control over their data. Citizens of Pasadena have not been afforded the opportunity to opt-in or opt-out.

Facial recognition technology enables the government to automatically track residents' identities, whereabouts, associations, and even facial expressions. The use of this technology by government agencies can create unfettered citywide networks that place our communities under continuous surveillance. The powerful and automated nature of facial recognition incentivizes the needless expansion of surveillance in our communities.

Unaccountable surveillance and its potential exploitation prevents citizens from living safe, fulfilling lives and is a threat to civil rights.

Name: Yadi Younse

City: Pasadena

State: CA

ZIP: 91107

Meeting Date: August 12, 2020

Agenda Item: 2. Facial Recognition