ORT Prevention Grant Program

Local Evaluation Plan

San Fernando Police Department Theft Prevention Project

Submitted by

San Fernando Police Department

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Project Background

Organized retail theft has become a widespread issue affecting communities across the country, including the City of San Fernando. Criminals are conducting well-coordinated theft operations targeting retail establishments, resulting in substantial financial losses for businesses, compromised public safety, and a negative impact on the local economy. According to the US Chamber of Commerce, California accounted for 12.62% of total US retail theft in 2021, indicating the severity of the issue.

Although the City of San Fernando is small, it faces significant challenges with retail and auto/auto accessory theft. A local car dealership has been repeatedly targeted by auto thieves, while local shoe retailers also experience frequent thefts. In a recent incident, thieves stole over $20,000 worth of merchandise from a high-end sneaker shop in a smash and grab operation. Other retailers in the area are also victims of theft. The city's vulnerability to organized retail and auto theft is further compounded by its location, surrounded on three sides by Los Angeles and with easy access to local freeways, increasing the risk of theft in the community.

The City of San Fernando Police Department has analyzed comprehensive crime data, including statistics related to property and catalytic converter theft, to identify critical areas of need. Data from the Department's Records Bureau shows a 193% increase in property crime from 2020 to 2023, highlighting the urgency of the situation.

Catalytic converter theft has also emerged as a significant concern, impacting individuals, businesses, and community safety. The rising prices of precious metals like platinum, palladium, and rhodium found in catalytic converters have made them prime targets for theft. Insurance claims for stolen catalytic converters increased by 288% from 2020 to 2022, indicating the growing problem.

Traditional theft prevention and security measures have proven insufficient in deterring or apprehending criminals. Therefore, the City of San Fernando Police Department proposes the acquisition of Flock Safety Falcon Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) cameras and an INSTAetch catalytic converter etching device to address these challenges. The Department also plans to conduct quarterly Etching Events to mark catalytic converters, increasing public awareness and deterring theft.

However, budget limitations have hindered the Department's ability to purchase these advanced technologies and equipment. The 2023-24 City of San Fernando Budget did not allocate additional funds for these purposes. The City of San Fernando Police Department sought funds from the BSCC Organized Retail Theft Grant Program to

purchase the necessary equipment and to implement theft prevention programs in the community.

The purpose of the San Fernando Police Department's Organized Retail Theft (ORT) Grant project is to address the significant problems of organized retail, motor vehicle, and motor vehicle accessory theft in the community. By acquiring Flock Safety Falcon ALPR cameras and an INSTAetch catalytic converter etching device, the department aims to enhance its ability to prevent and deter theft. The project also includes conducting quarterly Etching Events to mark catalytic converters, raising public awareness and further deterring theft.

These initiatives directly align with the identified needs of the community, as evidenced by the comprehensive crime data analyzed by the department. The data showed a substantial increase in property crime, including catalytic converter theft, highlighting the urgent need for action. By implementing these advanced technologies and programs, the department seeks to reduce theft incidents, enhance public safety, and protect businesses and residents from financial losses.

Scope of the Project:
The San Fernando Police Department's Organized Retail Theft (ORT) Grant project aims to address the increasing problem of organized retail theft in the community. The project will enhance theft prevention and deterrence through the acquisition of Flock Safety's Falcon ALPR cameras and a INSTAetch catalytic converter etching device. Additionally, the project includes quarterly Etching Events to mark catalytic converters, increasing public awareness and further deterring theft.

Activities and Services Provided:
The project will provide advanced technologies and programs to combat organized retail theft. The acquisition of Flock Safety Falcon cameras will enable the department to monitor and track vehicles involved in theft activities, enhancing their ability to identify and apprehend suspects. The INSTAetch catalytic converter etching device will help mark catalytic converters, making them less desirable to thieves and easier to trace if stolen.

These activities were selected based on crime and call-for-service statistics gathered by the San Fernando Police Department Records Bureau. Flock Safety ALPR cameras were selected as part of the Theft Prevention Project based on their successful application in other communities. Flock ALPR cameras will provide real-time alerts about stolen vehicles and vehicles involved in theft. The cameras will provide information that can be used in crime investigations. In addition, the Department studied

the Los Angeles Police Department's Catalytic Converter Etching Program and determined that a similar program would help with the rise of catalytic converter theft in the city, while educating residents about the crime. These are the first projects of this kind in the City of San Fernando.

Thirty-seven (37) Flock Safety Falcon automated License Plate Reader cameras will be installed near retail areas, major thoroughfares, and entrances and exits to the City. These sites were chosen because of their proximity to retail establishments and because they are routes used by perpetrators when fleeing the city with stolen merchandise.

Cameras will be positioned to provide maximum coverage for critical areas of the city including retail establishments, parking lots, public spaces and ingress/egress points within the city. They will be visual deterrents to potential thieves and assist San Fernando Police in identifying and prosecuting offenders. Cameras will give police department personnel a view of all activity tied to a specific vehicle within the network of cameras. Officers will be able to search vehicle information using make, body type, color, license plates (including partial, missing or temporary tags, and state recognition), decals, bumper stickers, and back or top racks. The cameras will also assist in solving cross-jurisdictional crimes and give real-time alerts such as NCIC wanted lists, AMBER alerts, Silver alerts, and vehicle Fingerprint matches.

Cameras will capture crime-related information that can be used to develop leads and alerts for solving crimes and apprehending offenders. For instance, if a camera captures a vehicle's license plate, the information can help identify the registered owner who may match the description of a retail theft suspect. The image of the registered owner can then be included in a blind photo lineup to confirm their involvement. Additionally, a vehicle used in a crime may be seized as evidence to investigate and identify the perpetrator, leading to an arrest warrant.

In addition, the City of San Fernando Police Department will seek to establish interagency partnerships with other agencies within Los Angeles County that use Flock ALPR technology. The Department will schedule and participate in meetings with other Flock users to establish protocols and agreements for data sharing and information exchanges, and to work towards a shared database of license plate information.

The San Fernando Police Department has included an educational element in its grant activities. This crucial component of the Theft Prevention Program aims to foster transparency, address concerns and build trust in the ALPR technology. Clear and concise information about the purpose, capabilities and benefits of the Flock ALPR

cameras will be disseminated through the city’s website, social media platforms, press releases, and in public forums.

Demonstrations of the technology and information about related statistics will be given at the San Fernando Police Department Annual Open House in 2024, 2025, and 2026. Additionally, the Police Department will work closely with local retailers, the San Fernando Chamber of Commerce, and the San Fernando Mall Association to establish retailers as active partners in crime prevention efforts and help retailers better understand what criminal activity to watch for and the best way to report pertinent information to law enforcement.

Grant-funded activities will also target vehicle owners within the City of San Fernando with a Catalytic Converter Etching Program. Vehicle owners within the community will have the opportunity to have their catalytic converters etched with their VIN or license plate number by the City of San Fernando Police Department.

At minimum, one Etching Event will take place every three months, for four events per year funded under this grant. Each event will span approximately six hours and involve two Detectives and two FTOs to assist with safety, plus two civilian staff to assist with registration and paperwork. Black & White Towing, a local towing company, has committed to collaborate with the Police Department by providing two tow trucks and drivers for each etching event. The Department will purchase a catalytic converter etching device, clothing, equipment and supplies to etch and mark catalytic converters.

The Police Department will advertise Etching Events via the City's website and social media accounts, with flyers, and through the City’s Constant Contact list of more than 500 residents. SFPD will also ask the San Fernando Sun newspaper to post information about the events on their website and in their written publication.

Monthly reports about the ALPR cameras and police activity related to them will be provided to the San Fernando’s Chamber of Commerce, Mall Association, Neighborhood and Business Watch groups, Transportation and Public Safety Commission, and City Council. Etching event information will be provided to these groups and via the City Manager’s Monthly Report following each Catalytic Converter Etching Event.

Project Goals and Objectives

The San Fernando Police Department Theft Prevention Program includes the following goals and objectives.

Goal 1: Enhance security measures to combat retail theft and catalytic converter theft.
Objectives:

A. Install 37 Flock Safety Falcon Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) cameras near retail areas, major thoroughfares, and entrances/exits to the City within 6 months of grant approval.
B. Train police department sworn and civilian personnel with the necessary skills and knowledge to utilize effectively the Flock Safety Cameras, thus maximizing their potential for crime prevention, suspect identification, and successful investigations.

Goal 2: Educate the public about Flock ALPR technology and its benefits
Objectives:

A. Develop clear and concise informational materials about the purpose, capabilities, and benefits of ALPR technology within 3 months of grant approval.
B. Disseminate materials through the City of San Fernando website, social media platforms, public forums and community meetings within four (4) months of grant approval.
C. Present information about technology to Business Watch and Neighborhood Watch groups within one month of cameras being functional.
D. Present demonstration of technology at SFPD Open House in May 2024, 2025, and 2026.
E. Press releases announcing receipt of grant, implementation of program and various arrests related to the technology.
F. Publicize arrests related to technology on crime blotter.

Goal 3: Educate and establish partnerships with local retailers
Objectives:

A. Using materials developed for goal 2 above, educate retailers about ALPR technology, its application, and benefit, within four (4) months of grant approval.
B. Establish monthly contact with retailers to build relationships

Goal 4: Establish interagency collaboration with other Flock users for effective crime prevention and increase the number of crimes solved.
Objectives:

A. Schedule initial meetings with other agencies using Flock ALPR within six (6) months of grant award.

B. Develop a plan for regular contact with agencies and establish protocols for collaboration within three (3) months of initial meetings with outside agencies.

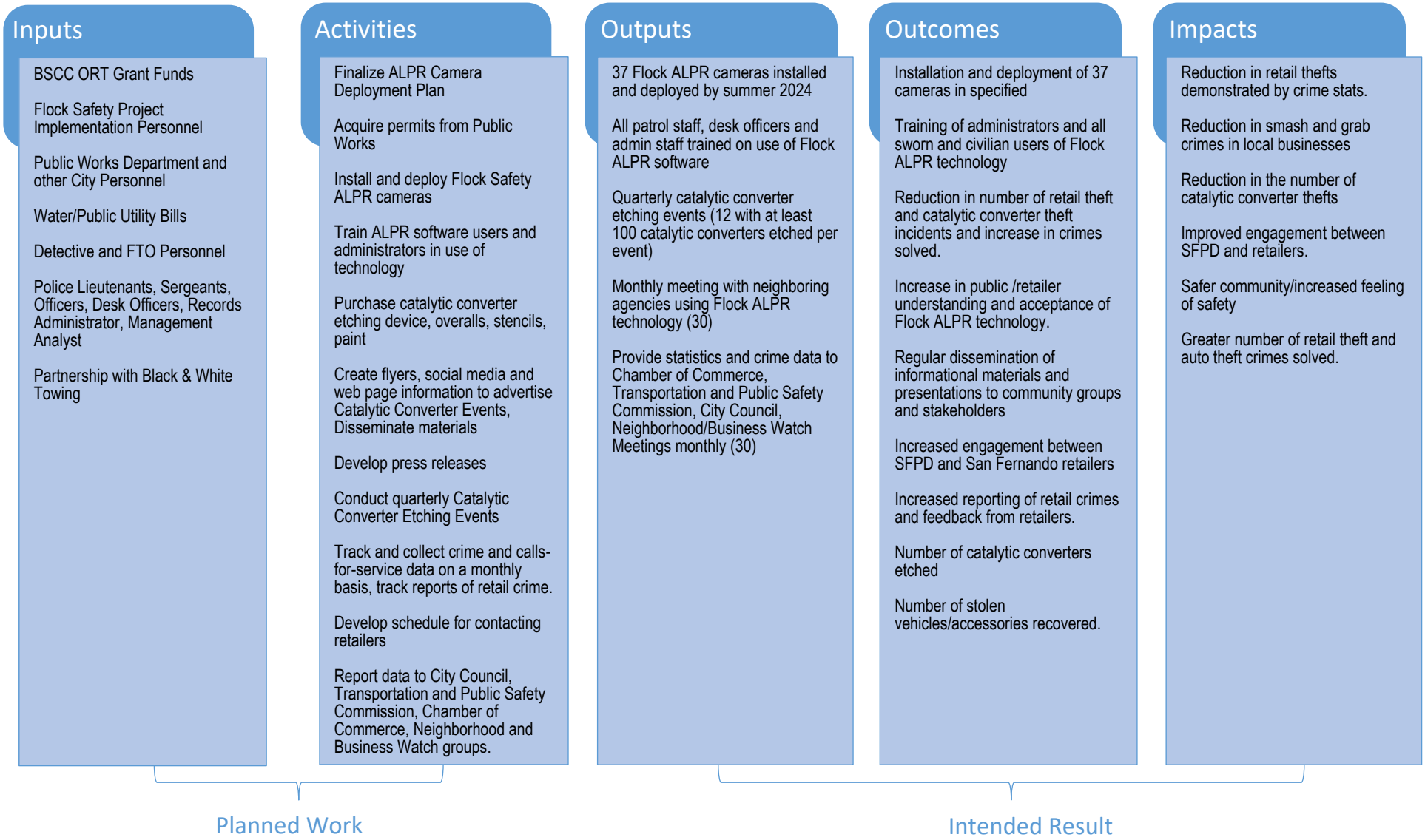
Goal 5: Implement quarterly Catalytic Converter Etching Events to proactively prevent catalytic converter theft.

Objectives:

A. Order an INSTAetch Catalytic Converter Etching Device, coveralls, stencils, a canopy, and signs within one month of grant approval and acceptance by City Council.
B. Develop a schedule of Etching Events within one month of grant approval.
C. Develop advertising information materials for dissemination at least one month ahead of first scheduled event.
D. Conduct quarterly Etching Events with proper staffing and equipment beginning by January 2024.

Project Logic Model

A Project Logic Model of the San Fernando Police Department's Theft Prevention Program is included below.



Process Evaluation Method and Design

An Evaluation Matrix for the San Fernando Police Department Theft Prevention Project is included on page 12. If all goes well with implementation, Police Department personnel will document project facilitators in quarterly and final reports. These facilitators may include the following:

1) ***Availability of Funding***: Staff will document the grant funding that enabled the purchase of equipment and implementation of the project.

2) ***Collaboration with External Partners***: Partnerships contributing resources and support to the project will be recorded in reports. Partnering organizations will include Flock Safety, Black & White Towing, and other surrounding agencies utilizing Flock ALPR technology.

3) ***Effective Project Management:*** A strong and diverse team is necessary to implement and carry out grant project activities. Sworn and civilian staff, City leaders and retailers will all need to work together for the success of the Theft Prevention Project. The Department will note the role of project managers, team leaders, and other city staff members in overseeing and implementing the project and ensuring its successful implementation.

4) ***Staff Expertise and Training***: The training of personnel is a vital component of the success of this project. Training provided to personnel to effectively utilize the Flock Safety cameras and other project elements will be tracked and documented.

5) ***Community Engagement:*** Department staff and project managers will record the level of engagement and support from the community, which may have facilitated the implementation of the project.

On the other hand, if project implementation does not go as expected, staff will note and report the project barriers and challenges. These hindrances may include the following:

1) ***Community Resistance***: Department personnel will document and report any resistance or lack of support from community leaders or members.

2) ***Project Delays:*** Any delays to project implementation, including those due to installation problems, supply chain problems, scheduling difficulties or political

issues, will be reported in quarterly correspondence and the final evaluation/report.

3) ***Budget Constraints***: While no limitations in funding are expected with project implementation, any issues with acquiring the necessary project resources or conducting planned activities will be noted.

4) ***Technical Issues:*** Department personnel will record any technical difficulties encountered during the installation or operation of equipment, such as the Flock Safety cameras or catalytic converter etching equipment.

5) ***Logistical Challenges:*** Staff will note any challenges related to scheduling, coordination, or communication that impeded the progress of the project.

6) ***External Factors:*** the Department will document any unforeseen events or external factors, such as natural disasters or changes in regulations that may affect the project's implementation.

Process Evaluation Research Design:

The process evaluation research design for this project will include a mix of quantitative and descriptive methods. Quantitative data will be used to measure the number of cameras installed, personnel trained, retail theft crimes reported and solved, the number of stolen motor vehicles or motor vehicle accessories recovered, and etching events conducted. Descriptive data will be used to describe the process of installation, training, and event organization.

Project Oversight Structure and Decision-Making Process:

The project oversight structure includes a project director, working in conjunction with command staff to coordinate project activities, schedules, and making project-level decisions. A financial officer is responsible for managing and reporting on grant budget activities. The original project director, Lieutenant Rosenberg, is on extended medical leave and the Police Department’s Administrative Commander retired in November of 2023. As a result, the Department’s Management Analyst is acting as the project director until a permanent lieutenant is appointed. The Management Analyst works in concert with acting lieutenants who are appointed on a rotating basis until the position is filled permanently. The Police Department Records Administrator is the acting financial director of the project.

Monitoring, Effectiveness, and Adjustment:

The project components will be monitored through regular data collection and reporting to BSCC and local stakeholders. Effectiveness will be determined by the successful installation of equipment, and the number of catalytic converter etching events held. Quantitative data such as the number of ORT or vehicle theft crimes solved and the reduction of catalytic converter thefts will be analyzed.

Procedures to Ensure Fidelity:

Procedures to ensure fidelity include following established purchasing policies for the acquisition of equipment, protocols for equipment installation, training, and event organization. Regular monitoring and reporting will help identify any deviations from the plan and allow for adjustments to be made as necessary.

Analysis of Quantitative and Qualitative Data:

Quantitative process data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize the installation of cameras, training sessions conducted, response to ALPR hits, and crimes solved. Qualitative data, gathered from community members and leaders will be analyzed to identify common themes or patterns in feedback from stakeholders.

A snapshot of the project's process evaluation can be found in the following matrix.

Process Evaluation Method and Design

Input/Resource/Activity/Output	Data Element(s)	Data Source(s)	Frequency of Data Collection
Installation of 37 cameras in specified locations	Number of cameras installed, installation completion dates, and locations of installed cameras. Number of functioning cameras and camera functionality status, date when all cameras are deemed functional.	Project management records and/or documentation from Flock Installation team. Verified testing of equipment. Invoices Inspection reports and confirmation from Flock Safety. Verified functionally through system testing.	One time at installation and according to Flock Safety protocols thereafter.
Train police department sworn and civilian personnel with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively utilize the Flock Safety Cameras, thus maximizing their potential for crime prevention, suspect identification, and successful investigations.	Number of shift roll calls and training sessions, roll call attendance rosters. Number of sworn and civilian personnel using technology.	Deployment Period schedules, attendance records/Sergeant Logs Training documentation, records from Flock Safety. Verification through physical observation in training environment.	To begin as soon as camera installation begins. Training each year of grant period and with new personnel.
Increase number of ORT and auto theft crimes solved.	Number of crimes solved.	Police Department records and incident reports, investigative software.	Monthly
Development and dissemination of public information materials and presentations via City website, social media platforms and community meetings, Department Open House, and press releases. Track statistics for Department Performance Measures for use when presenting information.	Feedback from public forums and community meetings website and social media engagement. Attendance and feedback from Business Watch and Neighborhood Watch meetings Press release distribution	Surveys and feedback forms Analytics and User Feedback Meeting attendance logs, notes, feedback forms. Copies of press releases with publication dates. Department and Flock software, Department incident reports and logs.	Annually throughout duration of grant

Develop flyers, surveys, and informational materials for distribution to retailers. Establish regular contact and reporting to local retailers	Retailer participation and feedback	Surveys and participation in Business Watch and Chamber of Commerce meetings	Monthly/quarterly
Track reports of retail crimes	Number of reported retail crimes	Police Department records, incident reports, investigative, and crime reporting software.	Monthly with quarterly and annual reports
Develop and/or acquire list of other agencies in Los Angeles County Region who are using Flock technology. Schedule and/or participate in monthly Zoom, phone, or in-person meetings with representatives from agencies. Develop collaboration protocol.	Agreements and protocols with other agencies	Documentation, shared data, solved crimes	Monthly/quarterly
Conduct quarterly Etching Events for community residents; etch at least 100 catalytic converters at each event. Reduce catalytic converter theft.	Number of etching events conducted. Attendance at etching events Number of vehicles with etched catalytic converters. Incidents of catalytic converter theft.	Project documentation and event records Event sign-in sheets and registration forms Etching event records Police Department records and incident reports.	Quarterly, with incidents of theft recorded monthly.

Outcome Evaluation Method and Design

Outcomes

Project outcomes of the San Fernando Theft Prevention Project are defined as the measurable changes in the rates of organized retail theft, auto theft, and catalytic converter theft, as well as the level of public awareness and education about these crimes. More specifically, outcomes to be assessed throughout the grant period are the

1) reduction in organized retail theft and auto theft crimes,
2) change in the number of crimes solved due to the use of Flock Safety Falcon cameras,
3) change in the number of catalytic converter theft incidents, and
4) improvement in public awareness and education about retail and auto theft prevention.

Data Sources and Collection

Data sources for these outcomes will include police department records and incident reports, investigative software, project documentation, event records, surveys and feedback forms, and analytics and user feedback.

Data will be collected monthly for reduction in crimes, quarterly for etching events and public awareness efforts, and monthly/quarterly for collaboration with other agencies and overall project outcomes.

Strategies for Determining Outcomes Due to the Project:

The change in crime rates and public awareness will be compared to historical data and trends. Any significant deviation from these trends following the implementation of the project will be attributed to the project's impact. However, it may be challenging to isolate the project's impact from other external factors that could influence crime rates and public awareness. One limitation is the potential influence of external factors, such as changes in economic conditions or law enforcement strategies, which could also affect crime rates.

Analysis of Qualitative and Quantitative Data

As with the Process Evaluation, the outcome evaluation research design for this project will include a mix of quantitative and descriptive methods. Quantitative data will be used to measure the number of cameras installed, personnel trained, retail theft crimes reported and solved, the number of stolen motor vehicles or motor vehicle accessories recovered, and etching events conducted. Descriptive data will be used to describe the process of installation, training, and event organization.

Project Evaluation

Four main questions will be addressed with the project evaluation.

1) What is the impact of the project on reducing organized retail theft and auto theft crimes in the City of San Fernando?
2) To what extend does the use of Flock Safety ALPR cameras contribute to the solving of crimes related to organized retail theft and motor vehicle theft?
3) How effective is the Catalytic Converter Etching Program in reducing incidents of catalytic converter theft?
4) What is the level of public awareness and understanding of organized retail theft and motor vehicle theft prevention measures before and after project implementation?

The estimated number of project activities to be accomplished include:

- The installation of 37 Flock ALPR cameras installed and deployed
- Thirty-five (35) patrol officers, all desk officers and administrative staff trained to use Flock ALPR software.
- Twelve (12) Catalytic Converter Etching Events with at least 100 catalytic converters etched per event
- At least 12 monthly meeting with neighboring agencies using Flock ALPR technology
- Provide monthly project information and data to Chamber of Commerce, Transportation and Public Safety Commission, City Council, and Neighborhood/Business Watch Meetings.

Activity completion and success will be determined based on the specific milestones achieved, such as the installation of all 37 cameras, successful execution of quarterly Catalytic Converter Etching Events, Completion of Training for Police Department Personnel, and the provision of project data to community groups throughout the grant project.

ORT Grant Program

Outcome Evaluation Matrix

Outcome	Definition	Data Source(s)	Frequency of Data Collection
Installation and deployment of 37 Flock ALPR Cameras	The number of Flock ALPR Cameras installed and deployed during grant period	Project management records and/or documentation from Flock Installation team. Verified testing of equipment. Invoices Inspection reports and confirmation from Flock Safety. Verified functionally through system testing	One time at installation and according to Flock Safety protocols thereafter.
Training of administrators and all sworn and civilian users of Flock ALPR technology	Number of personnel who can effectively use Flock ALPR technology	Deployment Period schedules, attendance records/Sergeant Logs Training documentation, records from Flock Safety. Verification through physical observation in training environment.	At beginning of ALPR installation and annually, thereafter.
Increase in public/retailer understanding and acceptance of Flock ALPR technology.	Number of Chamber of Commerce, community meeting, and event participants, positive feedback from participants	Surveys and feedback forms Website and Social Media Engagement Analytics and User Feedback Attendance and feedback from Business Watch and Neighborhood Watch meetings Meeting attendance logs, notes, feedback forms.	At each meeting and annually.
Reduction in the number of ORT, and vehicle theft crimes	Increase in the number of ORT cases being actively worked	Internal database, investigative software, Case management system	Each time an action is taken on an ORT case, monthly/quarterly
Reduction in the number of catalytic converter thefts	Increase in the number of stolen vehicles and the amount of goods recovered	Internal database, investigative software,	Each time an operation is completed, monthly/quarterly
Improvement in public awareness and education about retail and auto theft prevention	Number of retailers and community members given information about retail and auto theft prevention activities	Case management system	Each time a case is filed

Increased reporting of retail crimes and feedback from retailers	Increase in the number of ORT incidents being reported by businesses/retailers	Police Department records, incident reports, investigative, and crime reporting software. Internal database (Omnigo, evidence.com), Sergeant Logs.	Each time an incident is reported and monthly
Reduction in incidents of retail theft	Number of reported retail thefts as demonstrated by crime stats	Police Department records, incident reports, investigative, and crime reporting software.	Monthly
Established relationships with agencies using Flock technology.	Number of agreements and protocols with neighboring Flock users	Documentation of meetings and protocol, shared data, solved crimes	Monthly or quarterly, depending on agreements with other agencies.
Number of catalytic converters etched	Number of catalytic converters etched at each Etching Event	Project documentation and event records Attendance at etching events Event sign-in sheets and registration forms Etching event records	Quarterly
Decrease in catalytic converter thefts	Decrease in the number of reported catalytic converter thefts	Police Department records and incident reports	Monthly
Increase in number ORT cases solved	Increase in Organized Retail Theft cases solved	Police Department records and incident reports, investigative software.	Monthly
Increase in number of stolen vehicles recovered	Increase in the number of stolen vehicles recovered using Flock ALPR technology	Police Department records and incident reports	Monthly

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Local Evaluation Plan for the San Fernando Police Department's Organized Retail Theft Prevention Grant Project provides a comprehensive framework for assessing the project's impact and effectiveness. By addressing the significant challenges posed by organized retail theft and auto theft in the community, the project aims to enhance security measures, educate the public, and establish partnerships to combat these crimes.

Through the acquisition of Flock Safety Falcon ALPR cameras and an INSTAetch catalytic converter etching device, along with conducting quarterly Etching Events, the project seeks to reduce theft incidents, improve public safety, and protect businesses and residents from financial losses. The plan's process evaluation will track the implementation of project activities, while the outcome evaluation will assess the project's impact on reducing crime rates and increasing public awareness.

The project evaluation measures will serve as crucial evidence for the San Fernando Police Department to advocate for future grant funding or to request city funds for the ongoing use of Flock Safety ALPR cameras within the City of San Fernando. Overall, the department remains committed to improving the safety and security of the community and looks forward to the positive impact of these initiatives.