San Jose Police Department's

ORT Prevention Grant Program

Local Evaluation Plan

Submitted by:

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Project Background

What information can you provide that is essential to understanding the need for the project?

The City of San Jose is the largest city in Northern California and the San Francisco Bay area, the third largest in California, and the 13th largest in the United States. With approximately 1 million residents and covering an area roughly 180 square miles, San Jose is a major population and commercial hub. The city is home to numerous major retailers and includes multiple large-scale shopping centers such as Westfield Valley Fair, Westfield Oakridge Mall, Eastridge Center Mall, and Santana Row. These major shopping hubs draw people from the greater Bay Area and beyond. In addition to the major malls, numerous strip malls and shopping centers cover the city, with major retailers such as Apple, Lululemon, Sephora, Gucci, Target, Home Depot, Ulta Beauty, Best Buy, and Sunglass Hut.

These shopping areas are major targets for organized retail theft (ORT) related crimes Bay Area-wide. The geography of the Bay Area and the nature of ORT make it a transitory crime, often involving groups of offenders that travel throughout multiple jurisdictions in the Bay Area. These factors create challenges in identifying, investigating, and arresting offenders. ORT crime may take many forms, involving a variety of shoplifting, commercial burglary, vehicle burglary, fraud, and fencing of stolen items. San Jose Police Department (SJPD) crime statistics show the following increases in ORT-related crime types:

- **Commercial burglary shoplifting ≤$950** – 119% increase in cases from 2021 to 2022.
- **Commercial burglary shoplifting >$950** – 58% increase in cases from 2021 to 2022.
- **Petty theft shoplifting ≤$950** – 105% increase in cases from 2021 to 2022.
- **Petty theft shoplifting >$950** – 95% increase in cases from 2021 to 2022.

However, despite San Jose being the 13th largest city in the country, the SJPD is among the most thinly staffed departments in the country, ranking 43rd in number of sworn personnel, falling behind cities with populations nearly a quarter of the size.[1] The staffing shortages, coupled with the increase in ORT-related crimes, have created compounding challenges for the department. Response times have increased, and in some cases, police are unable to respond to ORT-related calls for service at all. With a

[1] https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-largest-police-departments-in-the-us.html

focus on calls for service that are emergent or pose threats to safety, cold retail theft cases fall outside of priority responses. The result is that property crimes frequently go unreported to the police or are reported but not documented in a police report. So, although there is a dramatic increase in the number of ORT-related crimes, it is expected that even this is an underreporting of the issue given the frequent underreporting by retailers. The Financial Crimes Unit (FCU) has primary responsibility for investigating ORT-related cases. However, over the last 15 years the FCU has decreased in capacity from 23 to 7 full-time investigators. With the decrease in investigative capacity, coupled with the significant increase in ORT-related and other property crimes, SJPD has a demonstrable need to augment resources for property crime investigations.

What is the scope of the project?

With the support received from BSCC's ORT grant, SJPD will implement a robust multi-pronged strategy to combat ORT-related crimes through coordinated field and investigative resources, combined with additional technologies and forensic capabilities.

Expanded Field Resources

With the shortage of sworn personnel and increased workload, field responses to ORT-related calls for service are often significantly delayed or may not occur at all. Proactive prevention efforts of theft-related concerns are similarly limited. With the resources made available through the ORT grant, dedicated teams of patrol officers will be deployed on overtime in the field to conduct proactive prevention efforts. Teams of three officers and a sergeant will be deployed to hot spot locations that have been identified by the Crime Analysis Unit (CAU) as areas with relatively more ORT-related crimes. The deployed teams will proactively develop and maintain relationships with retailers and will provide information to retailers on current retail theft trends and prevention tactics to avoid victimization, as well as how loss prevention agents can more efficiently submit theft reports.

In addition to the sworn field resources, deployments of Community Service Officers (CSOs) will be expanded. CSOs are SJPD civilian employees that respond to calls for service where the suspect is no longer at the scene (e.g., burglaries, some shoplifting calls, etc.), as well as support a range of non-hazardous investigative duties, respond to community inquiries, and assist officers in preparation of police reports. SJPD plans to deploy two CSOs on an overtime basis, three times per week, to respond to ORT-related calls for service that are either cold (the call may have been holding for hours) or where the suspect is no longer present. With dedicated CSOs SJPD expects more timely, consistent, and thorough responses to ORT-related calls for service.

Expanded Investigative Resources

Like field resources, investigative capacity is also diminished due to reduced staffing levels. In the FCU, there are seven detectives assigned to investigate approximately 10,000 cases per year. Given the organized and string nature of retail theft, dedicated and focused detectives are needed to have the desired impact on ORT. Through the support of this grant, seven new positions in the FCU will be created and dedicated to investigating retail theft crimes. Six positions will be part-time forensic analysts – these are individuals that are non-sworn, however have previous sworn investigative experience, and will support ORT-related investigations. Each part-time forensic analyst will focus on ORT-related cases and will be assigned primary responsibility to build and maintain relationships with major retail locations in the city such as Home Depot, Target, and the Oakridge Mall. The seventh position will be a full-time forensic analyst; the person in that role will 1) support investigators with analytical and forensic expertise, 2) proactively engage loss prevention officers and support the loss prevention reporting portal, and 3) provide administrative support for the ORT grant.

The newly hired positions will serve as force multipliers, supporting investigations, providing advanced forensic investigative techniques, and by building relationships with the retailers. These new positions will also attend retail theft-related conferences to network with allied agencies and partners to stay abreast of the latest advances and patterns that may support investigations in San Jose. Moreover, the grant will also support overtime for current detectives to ensure complete investigations involving arrests, apprehensions, search warrants, and suspect interviews are prioritized and conducted in retail theft cases. The FCU part-time forensic analysts and the full-time forensic analyst will also proactively collaborate with the Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office to support the prosecution of ORT cases.

Expanded Technologies and Forensic Capabilities

Beyond expanding personnel resources, SJPD's strategy includes deploying advanced technologies to augment policing and investigative effectiveness. SJPD will deploy 300 automated license plate readers (ALPRs) at key locations throughout the jurisdiction. The 300 new ALPRs will augment the existing network of nearly 250 ALPRs maintained by SJPD. ALPRs can support field and investigative capacity by identifying and locating suspect vehicles, and by establishing known locations and patterns of suspects.

SJPD will use grant support to establish a second latent fingerprint workstation. Currently, SJPD's Central Identification Unit (CIU) uses a single workstation to process latent prints for all crimes. Crimes against persons are prioritized over crimes against property, though property crimes account for approximately 70% of all latent print cases

submitted to CIU. A second workstation will allow for a greater rate of property crimes to be reviewed and investigated, which will support improved efficiency and suspect identification for cases.

GPS tracking devices will be deployed to proactively identify and track offenders. Retail loss prevention personnel use the trackers in items that are frequently targeted by retail theft offenders. The trackers are programmable and can be activated if the item is stolen, thereby allowing officers to pinpoint an offender's exact location. SJPD will collaborate with partner retailers to establish a tracking device deployment strategy.

Offenders engaged in ORT-related crimes routinely rely upon cellular devices to communicate and coordinate retail theft and fencing operations. In turn, successful investigations must effectively access and analyze digital data. SJPD will utilize grant resources to expand its ability to collect, review, analyze, and manage digital evidence extracted from electronic devices (e.g., cell phones, tablets, laptops). Staff in the FCU will receive training and be provided with access to Cellebrite and Penlink to build capacity in extracting and analyzing digital evidence.

What is the target area of the project?

A primary area targeted by this project is the relative backlog and large amount of ORT-related property crime cases. The augmentation of the FCU with additional investigative capacity is intended to directly impact the significant workload of cases. Geographically, the project will target areas that have been determined by SJPD's CAU to have a disproportionately high level of ORT-related crimes. The identified hotspots are expected to largely center on the major shopping areas and retailers previously described (e.g., Oakridge Mall, Target), though it is possible that the areas will shift over time depending on crime patterns.

What are the project's goals and objectives?

Goal 1: Create positions to augment the investigation capabilities of the FCU to solely work and investigate organized retail theft cases.

> **Objectives: A)** Investigate retail theft cases and analyze correlations and associations between cases, **B)** work collectively with financial crime detectives to identify links between retail theft cases and suspects, **C)** collaboratively investigate organized retail theft cases in conjunction with the Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office, **D)** develop outreach materials & provide outreach and educational resources to retailers, **E)** track and log investigation cases, **F)** attend training to

enhance program knowledge and skills, and **G)** attend monthly meetings to share information and strategies to deter retail theft.

Goal 2: Acquire innovative technology solutions to help facilitate retail theft investigations.

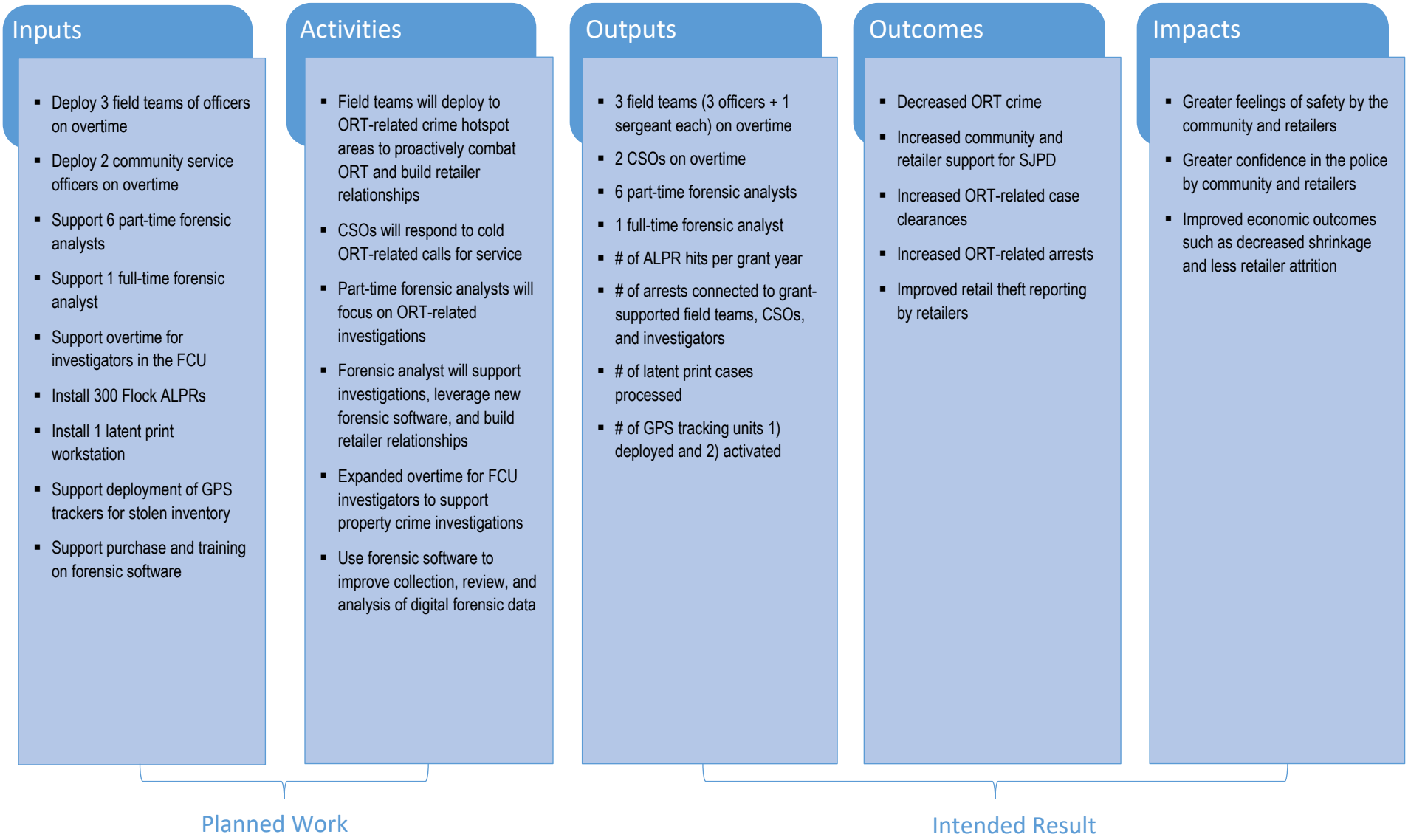
Objective: A) To procure software technology to cooperatively support activities intended to decrease and investigate organized retail theft crime.

Goal 3: Increase field resources for both officers and community service officers to proactively prevent organized retail theft-related incidents and calls for service.

Objectives: A) Utilize community service officers to respond to retail theft calls to initiate case intake at locations where retail theft has occurred more frequently, **B)** utilize officers to provide greater physical police presence at different retail locations, and **C)** attend training to enhance program knowledge and skills.

Project Logic Model

Figure 1. Project Logic Model



Process Evaluation Method and Design

The process evaluation is designed to understand the project's inputs, activities, and outputs. The evaluation will rely upon a mixed-methods approach based upon quantitative and qualitative data to understand project activities. For example, tracking ALPR reads and alerts as cameras are installed as part of the grant will provide trends in ALPR activity and utilization in ORT-related instances.

The day-to-day decision-making for the project will be managed by the FCU sergeant under the supervision of the FCU lieutenant. The Chief of Police, as well as Bureau of Investigations Deputy Chief, will provide strategic oversight for the project. The forensic analyst will lead the ongoing tracking of various project-related activities and reporting. Black Hill Research (BHR) will support the SJPD-team as needed and requested to ensure that project activities and related evaluation components are being considered and documented.

Project implementation will be monitored and assessed through proactive management of project components and related evaluation data. The SJPD team will meet with BHR at least monthly to discuss project progress and performance, as well as to discuss any issues and mitigation strategies. BHR will be responsible for ongoing data monitoring, which will be aligned with submission of the BSCC-required quarterly progress reports. BHR will provide SJPD with ongoing updates to share trends over time and assessments of data quality. The quality assessments will allow SJPD and BHR to collaborate on any potential issues, and to address those issues before they become a problem for the evaluation. For example, potential issues as the project is implemented may involve inconsistent data tracking, incomplete or missing data, improper usage of tracking fields, etc. Through proactive monitoring and ongoing assessments, the SJPD team can collectively ensure that the evaluation will be as robust as possible, and that the data available at the end of the project period will be sufficient to address evaluation questions.

The data will largely be quantitative from structured fields in SJPD's computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system, records management systems (RMS), and Flock's camera management and integration software. Ongoing data extracts will be completed and compiled over time to monitor trends and data quality. Descriptive analyses, including change-over-time and data projections, will be completed depending on data availability. In addition to the structured data fields, qualitative data will be collected by the full-time forensic analyst and part-time forensic analysts, where relevant. Capturing qualitative feedback ensures that nuanced context, such as successes and challenges, of grant activities like overtime targeted to identified hotspots are meaningfully recorded.

The qualitative data will be compiled and thematically coded to identify relevant themes. In addition, personnel and resources that have the greatest impact on the project will also be documented to ensure that key project facilitators are identified. Similarly, if personnel or resources are unavailable or otherwise inhibit the project, that would be recorded as well, to fully document any potential project barriers and challenges. Table 1 displays the process evaluation's primary inputs, activities, and outputs, as well as respective data expectations.

Table 1: Process Evaluation Components

Input/Resource/Activity/Output	Data Element(s)	Data Source(s)	Frequency of Data Collection
3 field teams (3 officers + 1 sergeant each) deployed on overtime to ORT-related hotspots	# of staff assigned; # CAD events and RMS incidents; # of "success stories"	CAD; RMS; Ongoing success tracking reports	Quarterly
2 CSOs deployed on overtime to respond to cold ORT-related calls for service	# of staff assigned; # CAD events and RMS incidents; # of "success stories"	CAD; RMS; Ongoing success tracking reports	Quarterly
6 part-time ORT-related forensic analysts	# of cases investigated; # of cases cleared	RMS	Quarterly
Overtime for FCU investigators	# of cases investigated; # of cases cleared	RMS	Quarterly
1 full-time forensic analyst to support investigations, leverage digital forensic software, and support the loss prevention reporting portal	# of investigations supported; establishment of reporting portal; QPRs submitted	RMS; Evidence.com; Ongoing success tracking reports	Quarterly
Install 300 Flock ALPRs	# of cameras installed; # of ALPR hits	Flock camera management software	Quarterly
Install 1 latent print workstation to create opportunity for greater efficiency and processing of property crime-related latent prints	# of latent prints processed; # of property crime-related cases processed	CIU processing log	Quarterly
Deploy GPS tracking units for stolen merchandise	# of units deployed; # of units activated	Ongoing success tracking reports	Quarterly
Purchase of and training for forensic software	# of software licenses purchased; # of software-related trainings attended;	Ongoing operational tracking by the SJPD team	Quarterly

Input/Resource/Activity/Output	Data Element(s)	Data Source(s)	Frequency of Data Collection
	success stories involving the software		

Outcome Evaluation Method and Design

The outcome evaluation provides an assessment of the project and its impacts. The evaluation will rely, like the process evaluation, on a mixed-methods approach based upon quantitative and qualitative data. Where possible, comparative analyses will be used to understand the impact of a particular technology (e.g., ALPRs) on call outcomes versus those calls in which the technology was not used. Depending on the nature of the targeted hotspots, control and treatment areas will be evaluated to understand the potential differential impact of grant activities. The project's goals and corresponding objectives indicate the areas of focus.

Goal 1: Create positions to augment the investigation capabilities of the FCU to solely work and investigate organized retail theft cases.

The first goal of the project is to augment the investigative capabilities of the FCU to create focused support for ORT-related cases. The underlying objectives of the first goal include A) investigate retail theft cases and analyze correlations and associations between cases, B) work collectively with financial crime detectives to identify links between retail theft cases and suspects, C) collaboratively investigate organized retail theft cases in conjunction with the Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office, D) develop outreach materials & provide outreach and educational resources to retailers, E) track and log investigation cases, F) attend training to enhance program knowledge and skills, and G) attend monthly meetings to share information and strategies to deter retail theft.

The first goal and corresponding objectives align with several identified activities discussed previously in the process evaluation component of the LEP. In particular, the hiring of part-time forensic analysts, a full-time forensic analyst, and overtime support for FCU investigators, will each support the objectives of this goal. To assess the outcomes of this goal several measures will be examined. First, ORT-related crimes will be measured over time through the RMS. Second, ORT-related arrests that were affected by part-time forensic analysts and investigators of the FCU will be measured. Third, ongoing case loads of ORT-related crimes, and fourth, corresponding metrics such as cases cleared, will also be tracked. Finally, as a fifth measure, the number of theft reports entered into the loss prevention reporting portal will be measured. The portal is a new and robust tool that will allow loss prevention personnel to not only submit reports, but to also submit corresponding evidence such as security camera footage.

Goal 2: Acquire innovative technology solutions to help facilitate retail theft investigations.

The second goal of the project is to more fully incorporate innovative technologies into ORT-related investigations. The underlying objective includes A) procure software technology to cooperatively support activities intended to decrease and investigate organized retail theft crime.

To assess the outcomes related to the second goal, the impact of ALPRs, the latent print workstation, GPS tracking units, and digital forensics software will be measured. First, the use of ALPRs to support case investigations will be tracked. Second, the number of ORT-related cases that were processed for latent prints will be measured to understand the impact of adding a second latent print workstation. Third, the deployment and activation of GPS tracking units in merchandise will be tracked to understand extent of usage and corresponding impact. Finally, use of Cellebrite and Penlink in support of ORT-related case investigations will be recorded. BHR will coordinate with SJPD to determine the feasibility of tracking ORT-related cases that were directly impacted by an ALPR. The impact of the additional latent print workstation will be documented in the CIU's processing log. The use of GPS trackers, and the use of Cellebrite and Penlink, will be tracked by the forensic analyst in the ongoing operational tracking that will also record notable "wins" and challenges.

Goal 3: Increase field resources for both officers and community service officers to proactively prevent organized retail theft-related incidents and calls for service.

The third goal of the project is to increase resources in the field to focus on ORT related calls for service. The underlying objectives include A) utilize community service officers to respond to retail theft calls to initiate case intake at locations where retail thefts occurred more frequently, B) utilize officers to provide greater physical police presence at different retail locations, and C) attend training to enhance program knowledge and skills.

The impact of increased field resources dedicated to ORT related crimes will be measured in several ways. Given that the field teams will be focused on identified hotspots, trends in both calls for service and reported crimes in the hotspot locations will be measured. In addition, the SJPD-team will coordinate with the CAU to identify relevant control areas to match against the identified hot spots; trends in calls for service and reported crimes will also be examined in the control areas. Comparing the trends in hotspot and control areas will show the extent of the impact of the additional field resources. Table 2 provides an overview of the outcome evaluation components.

Table 2: Outcome Evaluation Components

Outcome	Definition	Data Source(s)	Frequency of Data Collection
Decreased ORT-related crime	Decrease in the count of ORT criminal incidents	RMS	Quarterly
Increased ORT-related arrests	Increase in the count of arrests for ORT-related charges	RMS	Quarterly
Trends in ORT-related case loads	The number of active ORT-related caseloads carried by investigators in the FCU	RMS	Quarterly
Increased ORT-related case clearances	Increase in the number of cases considered cleared	RMS	Quarterly
Increased theft reports entered into the loss prevention reporting portal	Increase in the number of criminal incident reports submitted by loss prevention personnel into the loss prevention reporting portal	Ongoing operational tracking	Quarterly
Increase usage of ALPRs in case investigations	Increase in usage of ALPRs by investigators to further case investigations	RMS, Flock camera management software	Quarterly
Increased number of latent prints processed in ORT-related cases	Increase in count of latent prints processed that are connected to ORT-related cases	CIU processing log	Quarterly

Outcome	Definition	Data Source(s)	Frequency of Data Collection
Increased deployment and activation of GPS trackers	Increase in the count of GPS tracking units deployed in high-risk merchandise, and the increase in GPS tracker activations	Ongoing operational tracking	Quarterly
Increased usage of digital forensics software in case investigations	Increased use of software, such as Cellebrite or Penlink, to support ORT-related case investigations	RMS, ongoing operational tracking	Quarterly
Trends in ORT-related calls for service and crimes in hotspot and control areas	ORT-related calls for service and reported crimes will be tracked overtime in designated hotspot and treatment areas	RMS, CAD	Quarterly